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THE INDIVIDUALITY OF S. PAUL





# THE INDIVIDUALITY

## OF SAINT PAUL

BY

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LONDON

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## PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to present the man Paul, as he reveals himself chiefly in the thought of his letters. In general the principle has been followed that "Paul is a Paulinist against his will," which means only that his theological system—often baffling and sometimes repellent to the modern mind—has its roots in his own experience of Jesus, reacting upon his missionary environment. In his thought certain points of view are immediately demanded by contemporary apologetic needs, notably the doctrines of justification and predestination. Through such human means, the divine inspiration always works, even when it produces the classical and eternal expression of Christian truth which we have in the New Testament. Paul, however, cannot be explained by the thought—Jewish or Hellenistic—of his time. In the end he is neither Jew nor Greek, but Christian. The moulding element in all his activity, as thinker or preacher, is the spiritual influence of Jesus, as an original and creative power. The scanty references to the conversion experience in the opening chapter may appear surprising, especially in view of the stress laid upon it as the *matrix* of Paul's Christian theology. It will, however, be found that the occurrence on the Damascus road so enters into the whole fibre of his thinking, that its significance will appear only as the subject advances.

## Preface

In many of the translations I am deeply indebted to Dr. Moffatt's "The New Testament, A New Translation." Where his rendering has been used *verbatim*, the fact has been duly pointed out. Among modern commentaries, there stands out conspicuously Dr. Denney's on *Romans* in "The Expositor's Greek Testament." How conspicuously it does so in my own case the book itself will show, even where no open acknowledgment is made. As I claim no originality, it is superfluous to mention indebtedness in other directions. In the matter of references, I have tried to keep in view, so far as possible, the reader and student of the English Bible, who seeks fearlessly to keep in touch with the modern and constructive side of the historical method. Obscurantism, and indifference to the accredited results of modern scholarship are the besetting sin of much—it may be otherwise effective—popular exegesis and evangelical appeal. To paraphrase Cromwell's words about the State, "God, in seeking men to serve Him, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve Him, that satisfies." It is, however, His will that we serve Him with heart, soul, strength, and *mind*. There may be an "intellectual" cross also, which we are asked to carry; if not our own, then that which rests on our neighbour's shoulders. The "good news" for the new day is the ancient novelty of a living Christ, who is competent, as ever, to be His own Interpreter and Commentator, through the Spirit that leads into "all the truth."

R. H. STRACHAN.

Cambridge, 1916.

TO  
WILLIAM LESLIE DAVIDSON, LL.D.,  
PROFESSOR OF LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN,  
WHO FIRST GAVE ME COURAGE  
TO WRITE ;  
AND  
THE PEOPLE OF  
S. COLUMBA'S, CAMBRIDGE,  
IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MUCH KINDNESS, AND IN  
GRATITUDE FOR SETTING ME FREE TO DO  
Y.M.C.A. WORK IN FRANCE DURING  
THIS YEAR OF WAR





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## I

# INDIVIDUALITY

THE understanding of the New Testament has made a supreme advance through the clear recognition that the various writers have preserved their distinct individuality, in spite of the fundamental upheaval that took place on their conversion to the Christian faith. Students of the theology of the New Testament are now tolerably familiar with the position, that each writer is not expected to express his conception of Christianity in exactly the same terms, and from the same standpoint. There are various types of theological thought in the New Testament. The most strongly marked are the Pauline, the Johannine, and the Synoptic. The secret of these differing types is to be found, not so much in deliberate and distinctive construction of thought, as in the instinctive and individual response which separate personalities made to the new environment of the Christian faith. The New Testament is not merely a mine of information about the beliefs of the earliest Christian churches. It is the Christian Church itself, which was in being before a line of the New Testament was written, and is here uttering itself in all the multifarious variety of its experience of the risen Jesus. The New Testament says little about its inspiration. Only at a later stage, when the Church became conscious that it had a new volume of writings in its hands, is the subject of inspiration so much as mentioned. "Inspiration

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is a potency which is experienced before it is understood."<sup>1</sup> Even in 2 Timothy, which is not from Paul's pen, and is one of the latest of the New Testament writings, they are the practical effects of inspiration, and not inspiration itself, that are described. "Every writing inspired by God is also profitable for instruction, and for rebuke. It serves to raise up those who fall, and to further moral discipline, that the man of God may be made efficient and equipped for good work of every kind" (iii. 16). Paul himself, in Rom. xv. 4, thus speaks of the Old Testament in its practical effects. "The ancient scriptures," to paraphrase his meaning, "were written for our instruction. Their steadfastness and encouragement are reproduced in us, and give us hope of attaining to the perfected Christian character."

The experience of the risen Jesus that belonged to the early Church, during the period between the primitive preaching and the Johannine writing, is focussed for us in the writings of Paul. It is necessary in a work like the present, to assume certain critical positions. The present writer, it may be briefly stated, accepts all the canonical epistles usually ascribed to Paul as authentic, with the exception of 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. These, no doubt, contain genuine Pauline sayings, but their whole standpoint argues a later development of the idea and organisation of the Christian Church. The authorship of Hebrews must, of course, remain anonymous. The Lucan authorship of Acts is accepted, and with certain limitations, indicated in the text, the book is regarded as a reliable source, secondary to the epistles, for data relevant to the life and work of the Apostle. The purpose within the scope of the present work is to give such an account

<sup>1</sup> J. Denney, "Studies in Theology," p. 203.

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of Paul's thought, as shall duly emphasise his own personal experience that gave it birth, and to estimate his personal contribution to Christian thought. His conversion to Christianity and its mode is always the determining factor in any attempt to understand his theology. Apart from that, his speculations regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ are unintelligible.

It is not my intention to enter into any elaborate study of the psychology of Paul's conversion. Many erroneous attempts have been made to minimise its suddenness. I believe that Paul was never further away from Christian belief than just before Jesus appeared to him, on the Damascus road. As one who was "far away," he was "brought near by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13). The Cross was the determining factor in Paul's attitude to Jesus, both before and after the conversion. It is impossible to visualise too strongly the horror with which Paul, in his deep moral earnestness, once viewed it. For him, it stood for the judgment of God upon a religious impostor. His very conception of morality as legalistic, as a system of commandments which embodied the will of God and were to be obeyed on penalty of the wrath of God, led him to loathe the Cross. "Accursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." Jesus perished in accordance with the law. It did not matter that, as Romans vii.<sup>1</sup> indicates, Paul himself had failed to find favour with God and peace of conscience. Wherever these were to be found, it was certainly not in a shattering of the law, and what to him was a complete subversion of ordinary morality.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vii. 7-24 "is the experience of the unregenerate. . . . seen through regenerate eyes, interpreted in a regenerate mind. It is the Apostle's spiritual history, but universalised."—J. Denney, "Expositor's Greek Testament," *in loco*.



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Probably he sought, by persecuting the Church of Christ, to engage in a service to God which might conceivably outweigh his deep consciousness of failure and guilt in other directions. Misgivings he may have had. It could not but impress him that Stephen, and the other nameless Christians for whose death he was responsible, died with a peace in their hearts and a light on their faces he would have given worlds to call his own. Yet the misgivings were not connected with the course of action on which he was engaged. He was convinced that Jesus was dead, by the judgment of God. He was patriot enough to feel that his own inward moral dissension and struggle were no reason why a religion, that would, if unchecked, destroy the very foundations of Judaism, should be tolerated. No more unlikely mood, as a prelude to conversion to Christianity, could well be imagined. He always speaks of his psychological experience on the Damascus road as displaying the element of violence and suddenness. He feels himself as an "untimely birth," an "abortion,"<sup>1</sup> torn from the womb. Christ came to him with the suddenness of dawn on the first day of creation (2 Cor. iv. 6). It is all God's doing, as it pleased Him, an act of His sovereign will (Gal. i. 15-16).

So pervasive is this conversion experience that it will appear again and again, as the only means of understanding Paul's thought. Only the bare outlines of it need be mentioned here. It meant for Paul, primarily, that Jesus, whom He believed to be dead, was alive. Paul has no doubt of the objectivity of the appearance. He expressly dis-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 8. "*The abortion*," by the presence of the article, indicates that it may have been an opprobrious term used against him by opponents. There can be no doubt that to these Paul's conversion was so sudden and unexpected as to give the appearance of instability and fickleness.

## Individuality

tinguishes it from other "visions and revelations of the Lord,"<sup>1</sup> and classes it among the Resurrection appearances (1 Cor. xv. 8). Also this sense of its objectivity is apparent in his whole treatment of the resurrection body, in the remainder of the chapter just quoted. So real was Jesus to him then, that he can speak of Him as "the Man from heaven."<sup>2</sup> It is beside the point to suggest that some diseased condition of mind, such as epilepsy, was responsible for the experience. Even if such a pathological condition were present, we have no right to set any limit to the divine use of such physical conditions. The nature of Paul's "thorn in the flesh," however, is wrapped in obscurity, and, so far as we can see, he never connects it with the conversion experience. He tells us only what he was convinced of. He saw Jesus, who spoke to him. From that moment, once the shock of the experience had passed away, he knew that a gospel of peace had come to himself, and from him must be spread through all the Gentile world. The prophetic burden was laid on his soul. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16).

The words of 2 Cor. v. 17, must never be neglected in this connection. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation." They mean, not merely that the Christian looks out with new eyes upon the world, and that he himself is transformed; but also that he now lives as part of a new and supernatural environment, a new moral order, whose centre is Jesus Christ. Of this, the Resurrection of Jesus is the symbol, and the pledge. It was a new thing in the world's history for One who had died a criminal's death to be exalted to the right hand of the throne of God. As he pondered on this

<sup>1</sup> cf. A. Sabatier, "The Apostle Paul," p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 97f

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fact, there was born in the soul of Paul the great new message. The voice that spoke to him was the voice of the Creator, bringing into being a new moral and spiritual creation by His living word (2 Cor. iv. 6). We shall fail to understand the full significance of all that Jesus meant to Paul, unless we realise why it is that his mind instinctively flies to Genesis for its language. Jesus Christ not only revealed, but meant for Paul a new world, a new order of things. He saw his past with new eyes; the Cross spoke of a new shame, his, not Christ's; the men and women whom he would have slain at Damascus were his fellow-believers, and Jesus cared for them as for him. The ancient divinely-ordained citadel of Judaism was in ruins, and even the sacred name of God for whom he had such zeal was new, the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Death was dead; for if anything had stood for God-forsakenness, which was what death meant to Paul,<sup>1</sup> it was the Cross of Jesus. Surely it was a new world into which the proud persecutor, in the inimitable language of Acts, was led "by the hand." The old world was a system of things, in which a man was bound to incur the darkest of dooms, unless he was able to satisfy the demands that the "Law," the divine authority, made upon him. The doom was more than a punishment, arbitrarily inflicted. It was an inexorable necessity for all who were unable to stand before the face of the righteous God. The new world, of which the risen Jesus is the herald and pledge, is one where the moral demand is made by grace, and not by legal code. Men enter it already forgiven. They are "*translated*" or "*transferred*" into it. God "*qualifies*" men for it. They are not asked to qualify themselves. "The Father who

<sup>1</sup> pp. 218 ff.

## Individuality

has qualified you to share the lot of the saints in the Light, rescuing us from the power of the darkness, and transferring us to the realm of His beloved Son" (Col. i. 12, 13, Moffatt). It is a world of "redeemed" men and women. There is no happier rendering in Dr. Moffatt's translation than the words in which he renders Phil. iii. 20—"We are a colony of heaven, and we wait for the Saviour who comes from heaven." Jesus and the kingdom are in Paul's thought synonymous. He is the representative of the new order of nature and of humanity.

What are Paul's apparent qualifications for his task? What is there in his experience of Christ that makes it possible? Three things in particular may be noted, which are present in every utterance of Paul's about Jesus, and arise out of the stimulus of his conversion experience. In the first place, he is distinguished by the *intensity* with which he realised the actual living presence of Jesus with His people. The cloud that received Jesus out of the sight of the earliest disciples (Acts i. 9) had no real existence for Paul. There was no cloud on the Damascus road; only, Paul's eyes were closed, that they might be opened again by the touch of this same Jesus, through Ananias his missionary (Acts ix. 17). Secondly, Paul surpassed his contemporaries in the apostleship in the *passionate love*, that everywhere characterises his attitude to Jesus Christ. It is in direct proportion to the hatred with which he formerly regarded Him, and is without a parallel in the history of religious emotions. And thirdly, Paul's experience is unique in respect of the *intellectual daring* that sprang from it. Paul's natural mental capacity is in itself great, but left to himself, not even he would have dared to regard the Person of Jesus as the centre

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of the Universe. "In Him all things cohere" (Col. i. 17). "There is not in the history of the human mind an instance of intellectual boldness to compare with this, and it is the supreme daring of it which convinces us that it is the native birth of Paul's Christian faith. No one ever soared so high on borrowed wings."<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that the authority of Scripture for the human heart is its power to impose itself as "the only record of the redeeming love of God," and that in the Bible alone do we "find God drawing near to man in Christ Jesus." Now the only possible, credible, and authoritative recorder of such a fact as "the redeeming love of God," is he who has experienced it in his own life. Such an one was Paul. To him was given the "mystery," "the open secret" of God, hidden throughout the previous generations of men. No bolder sense of the place and responsibility which he himself occupied in the divine purpose of love for the world could be imagined, than Paul's. The revelation is made "in me." Like the Old Testament prophet, he was called "from the womb" (Gal. i. 15, 16; Jer. i. 4).<sup>2</sup> The expression implies an extraordinary and moving sense of individuality, which is not overborne and submerged in the processes of the eternal Spirit of God. God does not deal with His "chosen vessels," as though they were lifeless, impersonal things, like sticks or stones. The old life, for Paul, was characterised by weakness; the note of the new is strength, efficiency, dynamic. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). It is this comprehensive, clear-

<sup>1</sup> J. Denney : "Jesus and the Gospel," p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Paul is not thinking here of heredity and the environment of his early training. The thought expresses the climax of the prophetic consciousness, the eternal choice and election of God.



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eyed, intelligent strength that Paul regards as the highest gift, for which he prays on his readers' behalf. "I never cease praying for you, and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, and that His will may be communicated to you in the form of a comprehensive wisdom, and spiritual insight. I seek this, that you may live a life worthy of the Lord, and please Him entirely. May this knowledge of God that you have, bring forth fruit in every kind of good work, and may it increase ! May His glorious might infuse into you full power, so that you may manifest a joyous patience and endurance, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you for the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 9-12).<sup>1</sup>

What Christianity stood for in the experience of Paul, was not primarily a mystical or ecstatic power. It is redemptive and ethical. His relationship to Christ is a self-conscious one. He is Christ's "apostle" and "ambassador." Often he describes himself as His "slave;" and once as a "runaway slave," who has been branded, and brought back, so that it is useless for him to make the attempt again. "I bear branded on my body," he says to his Galatian opponents, "the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17). Any who would so exaggerate Paul's individual contribution to Christianity as to speak of him as its second founder, or even as its founder, in so far as it is a

<sup>1</sup> Paul, in another passage, equally recognises the importance of individuality in services rendered by the members of the Christian Church :—

"Our talents differ with the grace that is given us; if the talent is that of prophecy, let us employ it in proportion to our faith; if it is practical service, let us mind our service; the teacher must mind his teaching, the speaker his words of counsel; the contributor must be liberal, the superintendent must be in earnest; the sick visitor must be cheerful." (Rom. xii. 4-6, Moffatt), *cf.* 1 Cor. xii. 44ff; Ephes. iv. 11.

## The Individuality of S. Paul

redemptive religion, would have incurred from him some such retort as that given in 1 Cor. i. 13. Any who would so minimise the human element as to give his words an authoritative place equal to those of Jesus, are equally guilty of misunderstanding. The true position is as he himself states it. "Be ye imitators of me," he says to both, "as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 1). There is the still bolder utterance, "I have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See verses 10 to 16 in Moffatt's translation.

## II

### THE PATRIOT

IN view of the attempts made by modern Judaism to regard the distinctive elements in the thought and religion of Paul as really un-Jewish,<sup>1</sup> and of the modern tendency in Christian scholarship to emphasise the formative influence of Hellenistic thought on his theological speculation and religious experience, it is desirable to re-examine the consciousness of Paul himself on this point. The testimony it affords is distinctly on the side of our continuing to regard him as, in all essential particulars, "an Hebrew of the Hebrews." The evidence falls into two parts. One is the sense of Jewish nationality which emerges strongly and spontaneously in all his writing; the other is the undoubted influence of Judaism, in its Pharisaic form, on all his thought. Both parts of the evidence necessarily depend largely on the information available to us regarding his career subsequent to his conversion. Our knowledge regarding his pre-Christian days, and his manner of thought, rests either on conjecture, or on inference from passages in the Epistles and Acts. In the present chapter and the two following, the attempt is made to set forth the Judaism of Paul, first as a Patriot, and second, as a Pharisee. It is not sought to minimise the significance of his contact with Greek thought, which was a much stronger influence during his missionary activity among Greeks than in his earlier days. The debt Paul owes to Hellenism will be

<sup>1</sup> e.g., C. S. Montefiore, "Judaism and S. Paul"

## The Individuality of S. Paul

noted and estimated in the course of our treatment of his thought.

The patriotism of the Jew, in its normal and typical form, is distinct from any other the world has seen. It is "religious patriotism," to borrow Cheyne's phrase. With the people as a whole, as a "congregation" and not as individuals, God establishes His relationship. Israel is a theocracy. Never since the creation of the world has God entered into such a "covenant" with any people (*e.g.*, Deut. iv. 32ff.). The great historical moments in the history of the nation are the deliverance from Egypt and the exile. These take their place also, as signal acts of salvation, either realised or expected, in the religious consciousness of the individual. Emphasis is constantly laid on the fact that the "salvation" of the individual is bound up with that of the people. The Law in Deuteronomy (*e.g.* vi. 4) is prefaced by "Hear thou," but is addressed to all Israel. The nationality of a Jew was not merely an environment of speech, and thought, and tradition. It was a religious privilege that determined the whole direction of the individual's thought, will, feeling, and destiny. The sense of nationality, and the sense of God were inseparable. There was in Judaism no real conflict of loyalty possible between Church and State.

In Paul, this sense of nationality lies very deep. We may first of all take the explicit testimony of his own utterances. Paul is engaged in an ever-recurrent conflict with the party in the Christian Church who demanded that all converts should become naturalised as Jews, before they became Christians, and should submit to the traditional rites for adoption into the national fold.<sup>1</sup> In Phil. iii. 3ff Paul speaks as one who has emerged

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 147ff.

## The Patriot

from the religious bonds of Judaism, for whom Jew and Greek are one "in Christ Jesus." He has not, however, renounced his Jewish nationality. He also is able, if he chose, to rely on the "outward privilege" which it brings. It is a former "gain" which has become a "loss" for the sake of Jesus Christ. "Circumcised the eighth day, an Israelite by birth, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrew parents, as regards the law a Pharisee, in point of zeal a persecutor of the church, judged by the standard of law-righteousness blameless." We may also compare 2 Cor. xi. 22, where he asserts his claim to be an "Hebrew," an "Israelite,"<sup>1</sup> and a "descendant of Abraham." The assertion is rendered necessary in the very fore-front of his argument, by the emphasis laid by the Judaising party on Jewish nationality as an indispensable qualification—not only for a Christian, but especially for an apostle. In this connection a significant incident in Paul's life is recorded in Acts xxi. and xxii., when he is rescued by the Roman commandant, Claudius Lysias, from the hands of the mob. The occasion is one on which personal dignity would be touched to the quick, not only by the rough handling of the mob, but by the suggestion made by Claudius Lysias that he was an Egyptian "sicarius" or assassin. Pride of race speaks eloquently and spontaneously in the words that rose to his lips, "I am a Jew, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, the citizen of a famous town."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Israelite" has more of a religious significance than Hebrew. In John i. 47 "Israelite" means one who has inherited the religious promise of the nation. Nathanael is "without guile" because he sincerely feels they are fulfilled in Jesus, and is without that moral twist in his nature that made other Jews reject Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> Sir W. M. Ramsay, however, regards the statement as indicating that Paul emphasises his Tarsian citizenship, rather than his Jewish nationality. He regards this as an example of Graeco-Roman patriotism, which was directed towards the "city," not the nation. ("Pauline and other Studies," pp. 61ff.)

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Paul, like most educated Jews, is bi-lingual. He speaks to Claudius Lysias in Greek, and to the people in Aramaic. At the outset of his speech on the steps of the citadel, he lays additional stress on his pure Jewish origin and upbringing (xxii. 3).

The statement, "born in Tarsus," is qualified by the words, "brought up in this city," "educated at the feet of Gamaliel" in the strict training of our ancestral law. The words can only suggest that at a very early stage in Paul's life, his family transferred itself to Jerusalem. "Brought up" hardly suggests any other meaning<sup>1</sup>. We may compare his words before Agrippa. "That early career of mine from my youth up, which was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem, is known to all the Jews" (Acts xxvi. 4).<sup>2</sup> This fact in itself greatly minimises the importance of any Hellenic influences peculiar to Tarsus, that could have had a serious moulding influence on Paul's thought. So far as his recorded and explicit utterances go, he appears to owe most to the environment of his father's home, and to the training under Gamaliel. We may conjecture that it was a home impervious to the entrance of foreign thoughts, and conservative in atmosphere. Apparently he includes severance from his family as one of the losses incurred for Christ's sake (Phil. iii. 7, 8). That Paul diverged from the tolerant and Græcophil spirit of Gamaliel, need not surprise us. Headopted, as he tells us himself, an independent course in persecuting the Church of Christ, with a fierceness "beyond my contemporaries" (Gal. i. 14). Tarsus was a city where Greek philosophers and sophists had a congenial home. The Greek intellectual conception of religion as a philosophy to be discussed, instead

<sup>1</sup> "Nourished" in Acts vii. 20 is the same word.

<sup>2</sup> But see Ramsay, *op. cit.* pp. 67f.

## The Patriot

of a message of God to be believed, is no doubt the source of the phrase, "in wisdom of words" (I Cor. i. 17). It expresses the fundamental distrust ingrained in Paul's mental constitution from earliest years, of the "wisdom of the world," or, as we might call it, the exclusively "intellectual point of view."

Apart from these explicit utterances, we may illustrate the power of his patriotic instinct from Romans ix.-xi. There, his sense of pure Jewish nationality is a determining, if more or less sub-conscious factor in the development of his thought. In these chapters, Paul is compelled to deal with a problem that must have been of the deepest apologetic interest and concern in the primitive Church. If God chose Israel, as the particular medium of His revelation of Himself to the world—the central thought of all Jewish religion—why did Israel reject Jesus, the Messiah? Has God cast off His people? As Jewish hostility to the Christian Church increased, the problem would grow more acute. Every reader of these chapters must have experienced great mental embarrassment in attempting to follow the course of the argument.<sup>1</sup> The fact is that Paul's conclusion is in the end reached not by argument, but by the intuition of patriotic feeling. We must not have recourse to these chapters for Paul's views on the abstract question of free-will and predestination. Paul is dealing with no abstract question. He is himself suffering from a very profound agitation of mental perplexity and spiritual distress, which more than once disturbs the even flow of his thoughts. He

<sup>1</sup> Grievous harm has been done, in connection with the interpretation of these chapters, by the exclusive emphasis laid upon them as a source for proof texts, in connection with the theological doctrine of predestination. Paul's doctrine is simply a vehicle for the expression of an intense patriotism.



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tells us so himself at the very outset. "I am speaking the truth as a Christian man, I am telling no lie. My conscience, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, bears me out when I say that I am in sore pain, and that my anguish of heart is unceasing" (ix. 1-2).

The readers of Romans are mostly Gentiles, to whom the apostasy of Israel would appear as a serious intellectual difficulty. The difficulty would be accentuated by the fact that Christians used the Old Testament to prove their case for the Messiahship of Jesus. By these readers it would hardly be felt as the spiritual tragedy which it was to men of Jewish birth like Paul or John. "He came unto His own, and His own received him not." The defection of Israel proved a stumbling-block in the way of Gentile faith; still more so the impression that God had failed in His age-long purpose concerning the chosen nation. As a Jew, Paul feels the difficulty acutely, and his tumultuous words in Romans ix-xi are a signal illustration of the intensity of his feeling, which throbs in all the writing, and often bursts like a jet of flame through the surface of the argument, now and again devouring and demolishing the logical structure. The fervency of religious patriotism is confessedly the cause of the mood of "anguish of heart" in which he writes. "Fain would I myself have been accursed and one of Christ's outcasts, could it have helped the cause of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites. The sonship, the glory, the covenants, the law ordained by God, the worship of tabernacle and temple, the promises, are theirs. Theirs, too, are the patriarchs, and from them sprang the Christ, so far as natural descent is involved. Blessed for evermore be the God who is over all. Amen." (vv. 3-5). Here we have one of those daring thoughts of Paul's, where devotion



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to the State for the moment seems to submerge even personal devotion to Christ. Yet it is only the measure of his love for his nation. It is indeed, as Dorner says, "a spark from the fire of Christ's substitutionary love."<sup>1</sup> Paul's Christianity does not involve the abolition of national distinctions.

An argument follows, developing in Rabbinic fashion the theocratic idea—implicit in the idea of the Jewish State. Neither natural descent, nor moral attainment determines God's choice<sup>2</sup> (vv. 6-18). God's will is sovereign. The divine mercy, and neither human will nor effort, determines the choice. God may choose to display compassion, or He may choose to harden a man's heart, as in the case of Pharaoh. It is not a case of injustice, but of the carrying out of His purpose for the world. The two obvious objections that God is therefore unjust (v. 14.), and that all moral distinctions are obliterated (v. 19), are dismissed; the one with a passionate, "God forbid," the other with a fierce intolerance, a violence that is no real substitute for logic. He succeeds in convincing us only of his passionate devotion to the theocratic idea. God may do what He wills with His own, even though that might involve the rejection of Paul himself (v. 3.). He is really faced with the perennial antinomy of determinism and free-will, predestination and human responsibility but Paul refuses to look at it as an abstract question, or in all its moral and religious implicates. The violence that

<sup>1</sup> cf. W. Temple, "Church and Nation," p. 51. "The most ardent expression of patriotism in all literature."

<sup>2</sup> The Old Testament prophets had effectually disposed of the idea of natural descent as entitling the nation to God's favour. They substituted moral attainment (*e.g.* Amos iii. 2). The ultimate result is strangely seen in the petrified legalism of the Pharisee. It was Paul's task to proclaim God's choice of men and nations as resting on no human merit or attainment whatsoever.

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carries him on, and sweeps the most relevant arguments aside, is the energy of patriotic devotion to the Jewish theocratic ideal. He is thinking not in restrained academic fashion, but with passion and in the concrete.

It is, moreover, instructive for our understanding of the man to notice how, in vv. 22 ff., he not only uses the quotation from Jeremiah in a sense foreign to the prophet's meaning,<sup>1</sup> but also takes advantage of the tenderer metaphorical significance of *vessel*. With a stroke of the pen, he deserts all the harsher logical implications involved in the metaphor of clay and potter. He makes a sudden leap in his thought, like that in Watts's version of Psalm c.,

"His sovereign power without our aid,  
Made us of clay and formed us *men*."

Paul's tenderness for the nation and his Christian conception of God, together insensibly modify his previous argument. The two ideas of God's sovereignty and God's compassionate long-suffering are set naively side by side. There is no sense that the second contradicts the logical implicates of the first. These logical implicates have been already summarily and impatiently dismissed. The heart of the Jewish patriot and Christian missionary speaks. The rejection of Israel is neither total, nor final. There is a remnant as foretold by the prophets (vv. 27-29), and it will yet have its place in the Kingdom of God, along with the Gentiles (vv. 23-24). Paul has become entangled in the net of his own logic, and his burning patriotism enables him to escape. Doubtless, escape from the more abstract problem of predestination and free-will will always be effected not by means of the head, but of the heart.

<sup>1</sup> Paul uses the Old Testament with extraordinary freedom: at one time quoting from the LXX., at another apparently translating from the Hebrew. The context often does not matter to him, so long as the language conveys his meaning.

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We may follow this underlying mood through the next stage of the discussion, ix. 30-x. 21. Paul here accuses the Jewish nation of "sin," and attaches to them moral responsibility for their apparent rejection by God. The accusation would not surprise us—it is obvious—were it not that Paul previously asserted that the sovereign will of God has not necessarily any relation to the rightness or wrongness of human action (ix. 11). It is, however, the human tragedy that is before his eyes. The "righteousness," the "peace with God" that ought to have been Israel's, is attained by Gentiles who never sought it, and Israel, in aiming at righteousness, missed it. Moral zeal, without a knowledge of God, and without the sense that we need to know Him and that He reveals Himself, results in the worst form of moral decay and failure (x. 2 f.). "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is, salvation." The patriot is sincere enough to accuse his own nation of sin. He is Christian enough to be carried away in the end by a waking vision of the ceaseless, yearning, universal love of God, revealed in Jesus Christ. The vision begins at x. 11. The barriers of nationality are broken down. The thought is no longer of a Jewish nation only, but of humanity repulsed in its quest for God and spiritually disappointed, and of a God whose love is ample for all who call upon Him (v. 12). Then he sees that world-wide love again concentrated even now, on the Chosen Nation—a concentration all the more impressive that the love is so ample and so universal. "Have they not heard Him?"<sup>1</sup> All through their history God has been speaking to Israel. The vision

<sup>1</sup> Rendering in v. 14, "How are they to believe in Him whom they have not heard?" cf. Denney, "Expositor's Greek Testament," *in loco*.

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risers before his eyes of the quickly moving feet of the messengers in Isaiah's great picture, bringing the momentous news of deliverance over the mountains to the stricken city. Paul himself is one of the messengers. Again, however, a shadow creeps across the scene. He sees the failure of his own and others' preaching. "They have not all yielded to the good tidings" (v. 16). Can it be that they did not understand? "Impossible! As the prophet has also said, nations that are no nations, and nations that have no understanding, unintelligent worshippers of idols, have understood. Surely Israel cannot be doomed to perpetual ignorance!" And then there comes to light suddenly, in a prophetic quotation, the interpretation of the whole situation that commends itself to Paul the patriot. The acceptance of the Gospel by the Gentiles is meant "to provoke Israel to jealousy." He feels in that thought an added stimulus to those who would preach to Israel. He gains confidence to utter an unwelcome truth, "We preachers need something of Isaiah's boldness in speaking unwelcome truths to a nation of Israel's religious attainments. Why, God has been found by those who are so unintelligent as never to have sought Him. He has become manifest to those who have never had the sense to ask Him a question" (v. 20). Israel is not ignorant. Neither is she a mere pawn in the divine hand. She is disobedient and contrary. The only light that breaks upon his distressed patriotic soul is that moving prophetic conception of the constant and unwearied love of God, like a mother holding out her hands to a child that will not come. "All the day long I have stood with hands held out to a disobedient and contrary people" (v. 21).

In the opening of chapter xi., he again bursts forth passionately: "I ask, then, has God cast off

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His people? Perish the thought! Why, I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." What is the exact significance of this assertion of his Jewish nationality? It is not, as some commentators have supposed, in order to furnish in Paul's own case an illustration that God has not cast off at least one gainsaying Israelite. It is in order to assert that such a thought is impossible to a member of the Jewish nation, as Paul is. And standing firmly on this sure ground of patriotic conviction, he gives utterance to his resonant judgment regarding the whole matter. "There is a remnant, as Elijah came to know in the midst of his despair." As for the rest of the nation, in their darkness, "they have stumbled, but not to a fall from which there is no rising. Perish the thought! By their lapse, salvation has come to the Gentiles that the jealousy of Israel may be aroused" (xi. 11).

The acceptance of the Gospel by the Gentiles is meant, in the purpose of God, to arouse a new desire for it, in very shame, in the heart of Israel, to "provoke them to jealousy." This patriotic hope is in Paul's heart as he pursues his Gentile mission.

The same love for his own nation speaks in the trenchant words of warning to Gentiles, not to presume upon the favour God has shown them (vv. 13 ff.). It is his patriotism that is responsible for the description of the unnatural proceeding described in vv. 17 ff. Paul knows quite well that it is "contrary to nature" to graft a wild branch into a cultivated root (v. 24). That is his point. Israel is the cultivated root, whose branches have been broken off, and into which the wild branch of the Gentiles has been grafted. The hardening or insensibility of Israel is only partial (v. 25). By and by all Israel will be saved when "the full number of the

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Gentiles is made up." "God's gifts and call He never retracts." (v. 29).

Thus Paul's religious patriotism comes to the surface everywhere as he deals with the fundamental problem of Israel's apostasy. None but a pure Jew could write as Paul writes here. We find him even struggling with the conception that all distinctions of race were abolished by the gospel, which represents his maturer belief. His patriotism, however, survives all shocks. Israel's rejection is only temporary, and she must have the place of honour in the new kingdom. Only from this point of view can we approach ultimately the question of the influence of Hellenism upon Paul. It is sometimes contended that Paul's sombre view of human nature, his universalism, and his conception of the State are due to Hellenistic influence. The alleged "sombre" view of human nature may owe something to the prevailing Jewish despair and apocalyptic thought of the world as it is. However that may be, it is not Hellenistic, and Paul's view of the possibilities of human nature, under the re-creative influence of Christ, is the opposite of sombre. Universalism was no Hellenistic discovery. Judaism as the religion for the world was a characteristic watchword of the proselytising zeal of his day.<sup>1</sup> Paul was a Jewish universalist, before he was a Christian. It is his greatness that enables him to separate the law from the essence of Judaism, and thereby to set free the grace of God manifested in the history of the Jewish nation, for the whole world.

Paul inherited the privilege of Roman citizenship. He appealed to its protection in certain emergencies. By means of it he won the right of appeal to Cæsar, and established the illegality of his scourging. The

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiii. 15.



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fact of the Roman Empire, with its cosmopolitan conception of citizenship, is not required in order to account for the broadening of his vision. It was not his Roman citizenship, but his Christianity, that determined his conception of the Church of Christ. Christianity he did not regard as a new religion for the Empire. It is true that his missionary activity is more or less determined by the desire to plant Christian churches where they would be under the tolerant protection of the Roman power. This power, however, was only an instrument in the providence of God, for the bringing in of another and greater commonwealth, "which is in heaven." The State has only a temporary function. The Roman imperial power is that which restrains the secret power of lawlessness, the Anti-Christ, the antagonist of Jesus, and of His Church.<sup>1</sup> His view is eschatological, not imperialistic. It is neither Greek, nor Roman, nor purely Jewish. It is Christian, after the pattern of the first generation of Christians. "The churches scattered over the world were conceived by him rather as settled in an evil and transient age, like so many outposts and colonies of the heavenly commonwealth which was ere long to be established by the return of Jesus. Their duty was to wait and be loyal until they were relieved"<sup>2</sup>

In conjunction with Paul's deep consciousness of nationality, and arising out of it, is the fact that Judaism provided the chief forms and categories of thought through which his Christian gospel was mediated to the world. In the following chapter we shall see what it ultimately meant for Paul and for the Christian Church that he belonged to the strictest sect of Jewish religion, the Pharisees.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> J. Moffat, "Paul and Paulinism," pp. 63-4.

### III

## THE PHARISEE

#### PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

PAUL is three times recorded to have emphasised the fact that he was a Pharisee (Acts xxiii. 6, xxvi. 5, Phil. iii. 5). On the last two occasions, before Agrippa and to the Philippians, he speaks thus of himself in the past. On the first, before the Sanhedrin, he speaks as though he were still a Pharisee. "I am a Pharisee and a descendant of Pharisees." There is no trace of compunction for this utterance in Acts xxiv. 20f.<sup>1</sup> He does not admit that it was "wrong-doing." He simply emphasised the antagonism between Pharisee and Sadducee. He might be a member of the Christian Church and still describe himself as a Pharisee, as others did (Acts xv. 5). In this case he is anxious to proclaim his belief in a spiritual world, and to rally to his side those who shared this cardinal doctrine of the Pharisaic faith. With the Sadducees he had nothing to do. It may be said with truth, that Paul's Christian doctrine of freedom from the law cut Pharisaism to the roots; yet all that was good in Pharisaism—the zeal for God, the Messianic hope, the sense of moral responsibility, the belief in the supernatural—passed over into Paul's expression of the Christian faith. Had Paul been a Sadducee instead of a Pharisee, the whole cast of his Christian thought would have been changed. He always looked on his Pharisaic training and birth as a divine preparation for his life's work. God

<sup>1</sup> Farrar, "St. Paul," II. p. 328.



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had set him apart from his birth to be a missionary of Christ to the Gentiles (Gal. i. 15).

It is extremely important for the understanding of Paul, and in order to grasp the peculiarities of his thought, often so vexatious and baffling to the modern mind, to start with some general conception of the system of thought represented by Pharisaism. There are still difficulties and uncertainties besetting the study of Pharisaism in New Testament times. Are we, for example, to include apocalyptic as an integral part of the system? There can be no doubt of the place which apocalyptic conceptions of the world and its destiny, and especially eschatology, hold in Paul's thought. Are we, with modern Jewish scholars like Schechter and others, to regard the Rabbinism of the Talmud as approximately a guide to the Pharisaism of the New Testament times, and are we to look upon apocalyptic as a back-water of Judaism, the product largely of foreign influences? These positions, if conceded, would make it impossible to regard Paul, in his pre-Christian days, as a product of pure Rabbinic Judaism. He was indeed, strictly speaking, by birth a Diaspora Jew. In any case, if his own utterances mean anything, he was conservative, and came of conservative stock. His frequent insistence on his training in "the traditions of the fathers" can mean nothing else. Is it to be expected that one who diverged so seriously from the supposed traditional views of Rabbinic Judaism as to cherish apocalyptic views, would have occupied such a prominent place in the Jerusalem Church, and been entrusted with such an important mission as that against the Christians of Damascus? In

\* For the position that the spirit of Paul's pre-Christian religion was other than the spirit of Rabbinic Judaism, see C. S. Montefiore, "Judaism and St. Paul," pp. 1-129.

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the present treatment of Paul, it is assumed that apocalyptic speculation, as well as the Rabbinic system of legal interpretation, is organically connected with the development of Jewish thought.

Paul, then, is a Pharisee. How are we to conceive Pharisaism? His emphasis on his belonging to the party of the Pharisees implies that he does not wish to be identified with the Sadducees. Who are the Sadducees? It is difficult to treat the rise of these two aspects of Jewish religious thought except historically, and any historical treatment in these pages must be brief.

It is incorrect to describe the Pharisees and Sadducees as Jewish sects, in the sense that they diverged from, and opposed one another on religious points exclusively. The original line of cleavage was political, rather than religious, and it continued to be such until the collapse of the Jewish State in A.D. 70. The real significance of the cleft between Sadducee and Pharisee rests on the struggle between Hellenism and Judaism, which already, in Paul's day, had been going on for four centuries. In the later history of Judaism, politics and religion were inextricably connected. The key to the situation is found in the rise of Hellenising influences, following upon the conquests of Alexander the Great. Alexander died 323 B.C. After his death the empire he founded was broken up, and Palestine became subject in turn to Egypt and to Syria. In 175 B.C., Palestine became a Syrian province under Antiochus Epiphanes. Strong Hellenising influences were at work during all the political changes of the second and third centuries B.C. The LXX. version of the Old Testament, which was intended to meet the needs of the Alexandrian Jews, was published in 284 B.C., and effected among the Jews the spread

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of the Greek language as a medium of thought and intercourse. It is paralleled in its results by the effect of the English version of the Bible in 1611, on our own language. The speech of Greece firmly established itself, and the Jewish nation in New Testament times was bi-lingual. Along with it, there were introduced Greek manners and dress, and the Greek theatre and stadium for athletic exercises gained a prominent place in the life both of the Palestinian and Diaspora Jews. The Hellenising movement, however, overreached itself. In 169 B.C. Antiochus pillaged and profaned the Temple, and made a desperate effort to destroy Jewish nationality, and to merge the Jewish religion in the cult of Jupiter. Along with this new cult, there was introduced a poisonous leaven of the lascivious rites of Syrian religion. The action of Antiochus provoked an indomitable national movement under the leadership of Judas Maccabæus, and after a series of wars of independence waged during the years 166-161 B.C., the Syrian rule was overthrown. To all outward appearance the nation was saved.

The victories of Judas were politically a triumph of Judaism over Hellenism. The real struggle however, was not yet decided. The reigns of his successors, Jonathan and Simon, were marked by constant warfare with the Syrian power, but the issue was ultimately in favour of Jewish independence. Then came John Hyrcanus (135-105), son of Simon. Into the question of the varying fortunes of the Jewish State under Maccabæan rule we cannot enter here. It is a story of constant resistance to Syrian encroachment, culminating in internal strife, and the rise of the Herodian Dynasty. With the latter, the shadow of the Roman power fell on the land, and in 63 B.C. Pompey captured Jerusalem, and perpetrated what to the Jew was a

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crowning act of sacrilege, by entering the Holy of Holies, and claiming to find nothing there but a protruding stone.

In the midst of the political tumult there also raged a deep religious struggle, not to be decided by the political victory of dynasties. The Hellenising influences that came to a head under Antiochus Epiphanes were active all the time. The moment they made themselves apparent, strong opposition was engendered. There arose the party of the Hasidim. Their opposition was directed against the moral abuses which had crept in with the introduction of Hellenistic manners and thought, and forms of amusement. The Greek stadium, gymnasium, and theatre had made their appearance in many Jewish cities. In the opposition there was no doubt a certain amount of intolerant conservatism, and unreasoning resistance to any foreign innovation, without considering whether it was good or bad. Yet the instinct was right, in view of what the Jewish nation really stood for. Jason was high priest under Antiochus, and in obedience to the prevailing custom had changed his name from Joshua to the Greek form. He took a very active interest in setting up a Greek gymnasium in Jerusalem, encouraged the youths to train there, and even endeavoured to have the inhabitants of Jerusalem registered as citizens of Antioch (2 Macc. iv. 9). The gymnasium was established under the very shadow of the temple-rock, and Hebrew youths were compelled to wear the Greek hat, or *petasos*. It is easy to accuse the Hasidim of narrowness in opposing such things; we must, however, remember the close connection between Greek athletics and Greek religion. In every age, also, where it has been tried, the exclusive cult of the body becomes inimical to the highest develop-

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ment of spiritual character. Moreover, the spiritual influence of a High Priest, who was known chiefly as a distinguished patron of athletic sports, can never be ranked as great. Grave moral abuses were also connected with the Greek gymnasia in later times. At the very beginning of the second century, B.C., Ben Sira, the author of Ecclesiasticus, had entered his protest against Hellenising ways, by inaugurating a return to the older Hebrew "wisdom" or culture. He wrote down his philosophy of life in a form based on the style of the proverbial literature. The inroads of Hellenism, however, required to be met by a more strenuous type of piety than that represented by Ecclesiasticus. Under Antiochus Epiphanes, this was effected by the rise of the Hasidim, to whom the spiritual ancestry of the Pharisees is to be traced.

Their name ("the loyal ones") suggests, that they were men of very sensitive consciences, and were marked by unswerving fidelity to the finest spiritual traditions of the nation. It was they who kept, in "whatever shell of old-world prejudice, that spiritual treasure, so unspeakably precious to the whole human race, committed to Israel."<sup>2</sup> They were the Puritans of those days, and stemmed the tide of Hellenising influences that sought to encroach upon the ancestral religion and morality.

At first they hailed Judas Maccabæus as a great deliverer, and threw the weight of their influence upon his side. Yet the very completeness of his own and his successors' political conquest ultimately

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the Scotch *leal* is a better rendering, preserving the tenderer significance attaching to the Hebrew word from which the name Hasidim is derived. (cf. G. A. Smith, "The Book of the Twelve Prophets." I., p.243. n.2.)

<sup>2</sup> cf. E. Bevan, "Jerusalem under the High Priests," pp. 79f, a book to which this chapter is deeply indebted.

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reacted unfavourably upon the religious life of the nation, especially that aspect of it represented by the Temple worship. The priesthood grew rich on the offerings of the people. High Priests were made and unmade by the government in power. They became intent chiefly on retaining their positions, and there sprang up a rich ecclesiastical aristocracy, worldly in aims, and prone to yield again to those Hellenising influences which could not be destroyed by merely political victory. Out of this priestly aristocracy grew the party of the Sadducees. More and more the party of the Hasidim were compelled to withdraw their active support from the Maccabæan dynasty as against the priestly party, who became more and more subservient as the security for the observance of the sacred ritual increased. The latter no longer dared, as in the days of Jason, to commit any open breach of the law, to introduce idolatry, or to tamper with the Temple ritual. They had no motive for so doing. For them the true inwardness of the Temple worship had disappeared. It had become part of the established law of the land, and its observance brought them rich revenues.

In the development of this cleavage of spirit in Judaism, therefore, during the earlier Maccabæan rule, is to be seen the origin of the parties of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The names are first used during the reign of John Hyrcanus (135-105 B.C.) The Pharisees, "Separatists," are the real descendants of the Hasidim. The Sadducees derive their title from the proper name "Zadok," (2 Sam. viii. 17). From this time forward the Sadducees are principally identified with the political history of the nation, and with the priestly office. They are the lineal descendants of the Hellenising party. The Pharisee or "Separatist" is distinguished



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by his exclusiveness. He held aloof from politics, developed the study of the law, and resisted the introduction of foreign customs and ways of life. The Sadducee, as we have seen, upheld the ritual and ceremonial law; but the later developments of scribal law among the Pharisees he rejected, and based his religion and practice entirely on the written Mosaic code. They resented any religious claims upon them outside the limits that convention and decency imposed. In more modern days they would correspond to the opponents of Wesley in the eighteenth century, or to the Moderates of Scotland, during the religious struggles that culminated in 1843.

In the New Testament we find them disbelievers in angels and spirits and the resurrection. The whole doctrine of the spiritual world in Pharisaism was the fruit of prolonged national suffering. The unbelief of the Sadducee is no mere philosophical rationalism. It is the religious indifference of a prosperous caste, which had "found this world so good a place to live in that they desired no other."<sup>1</sup> The Sadducees, having become a sacerdotal and aristocratic class, conformed to the Law, moral and ceremonial, in a measure sufficient to retain their influence with the people,<sup>2</sup> and abjured idolatry. At the same time they were disinclined to be "righteous overmuch." As time went on, they became absorbed in the effort to retain their ecclesiastical position, an aim which constantly involved them in religious compromise. Their denial of the supernatural included rejection of the Pharisaic doctrine of predestination. By a piece of magnificent irony, the Fourth Evangelist has represented Caiaphas, a Sadducee—who would lay great emphasis

<sup>1</sup> E. Bevan, *op. cit.* p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, "Antiquities," xviii. 17.



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on man's freedom, in opposition to the Pharisaic doctrine mentioned—as speaking “not of himself” and as “prophesying,” when he gave his verdict for the death of Jesus (John xi. 51).

Herein is contained the reason why Paul is always careful to proclaim his spiritual ancestry, and his own religious attitude as Pharisaic. The word Pharisee has an entirely sinister sound in our ears, but it is necessary to remember that it would have no such exclusive significance for Paul. His great principle of emancipation from law, indeed, dealt Pharisaism a blow more fatal than even he could imagine. Great men always signify more than they know, and stand for more than they are conscious of expressing in their deeds and utterances. Yet Pharisaism, with all its abuses, conserved the living heart of Judaism, and kept alive that God-consciousness which was Israel's gift to the world.

## IV

### PHARISAIC DOCTRINE

THE various aspects of Pharisaism, relevant to the understanding of Paul's thought, may be summed up under the following headings<sup>1</sup> :—

1. THE LAW.

2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD—the conception of the two “aeons” or “worlds.”

3. MESSIANIC HOPES.

4. THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS AND SPIRITS.

No full treatment of these subjects is possible within the limits of the present work. All that can be looked for is such a handling of them as will enable us to understand the categories of thought with which Paul works, and the vocabulary that he employs.

1. THE LAW.—The “Torah” or Law came to have its prominent place in Judaism as a direct result of the reforms inaugurated by Ezra and Nehemiah after the exile. By the Law, was originally understood the Pentateuch. Every word of it was regarded as an inspired and immediate revelation to Moses, the great figure in the early history of Israel. To the Prophets, which included the historical books, a secondary place was assigned in the canon of the Old Testament. We are not concerned here with the critical questions concerning the composition of the Pentateuch. By the time of Ezra, it existed practically as we have it; and the work

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I am deeply indebted to Bousset's “*Religion des Judenthums im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter.*”

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of Ezra and his successors consisted in securing that the nation should have a codified system, containing instruction on all matters of religious and practical duty. The need was all the greater in view of the foreign modes of thought, manners, and ideals that continued to make themselves felt in the nation's life. The importance of the Law lay in the necessity for maintaining an exclusive attitude, and erecting a hedge against the intrusion of foreign, principally Hellenistic ideals, into the religion and life of Israel.

If the Mosaic law was to be effective in this direction, it is self-evident that guidance and instruction must be given to the people as a whole, regarding its application to daily life, and to questions of ceremonial purity that arose. The Law required exposition by competent hands. For the sake of a balanced judgment, it is well that the student of Pharisaism should understand the motives of real moral earnestness, and the broad principles of legal observance, that gave rise to the extraordinary code of petty and absurd regulations regarding things lawful and unlawful, and to the casuistry that inevitably accompanied them. To judge Pharisaism solely by the moral trivialities that arose from the system, is like judging the ability of the management of a railway company by certain glaring absurdities in the fares or the time-tables. Unless we approach the question from the historical point of view, we shall also fail to understand the extraordinary and daring genius of Paul, and the courage and insight arising out of the spiritual influence of Jesus, that led to his mature conviction that statutory religion and morality were done away "in Christ," and that the Law was only of temporary validity. The pious Jew believed that the Law represented the revealed will of Jehovah, and

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that it had an eternal, and even a cosmic significance. Even in Proverbs, Wisdom, which is another name for the application of the Law to the ever-changing demands of daily life and conduct, has come to have a cosmic significance, and represents the eternal principle of the Universe, as real and as fundamental as the laws that govern the stars in their courses. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel xii. 3). "Righteousness" is the perfect observance of the law. Proverbs viii., especially vv. 22-31, with their poetical personification of wisdom, illustrates the conception of the eternal place that the Law took, for the Jewish mind, in the fundamental scheme of things. We have a still more striking statement in Ecclesiasticus (xxiv. 1-8):

"Wisdom shall praise herself and shall glory in the midst of her people. In the congregation of the Most High shall she open her mouth, and glory in the presence of His power. I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth as a mist. I dwelt in high places and my throne was in the pillar of the cloud. Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven, and walked in the depth of the abyss. In the waves of the sea, and in all the earth, and in every people and nation, I got a possession.<sup>1</sup> With all these I sought rest; yet in whose inheritance shall I take up my abode? Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment; and He that created me made my tabernacle to rest, and said, Let thy tabernacle be in Jacob, and thine inheritance in Israel."

The "Law" or "Wisdom" is thus a fundamental principle of the Universe, and by God's own

<sup>1</sup> Or "wrought creating."

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fiat has been committed exclusively to Israel. The thought of Ecclesiasticus is still prevailingly Sadducean, and the Law had this cosmic significance for both Pharisee and Sadducee. The point of sharp divergence came in the application of it to daily life, and in the subsequent speculations regarding the future destiny of Israel, that arose in the times of stress. The Pharisee was in moral earnest, and his moral earnestness led him ultimately in two directions, which the Sadducee, satisfied with things as they were, did not find it incumbent on him to pursue. One of these was the Halachah, and the other what is known as Haggadah. Halachah was the application and interpretation of the Law, to the changing and fluctuating demands of everyday life and duty. Haggadah was the science of evolving from the ancient Scripture, doctrinal positions and practical admonitions; sometimes the Scripture narrative was embellished by parabolic or fabulous additions and allegorical interpretations. A certain mystical strain is also observable in certain forms of Haggadah.

*Halachah* is a word that means "walking," or, as it may be translated, "everyday practice." We have only to recall the frequency with which "walking" in the ways or "statutes" of God is spoken of in the Old Testament, or Paul's use of "walk" for daily conduct, to recognise what is meant. If our "walk" is determined at every point by legal statute, and we take the statutes seriously, it is obvious that moral perplexity has no limits. If the Sabbath was an ordinance of God, on which no work was to be done, and if we remember that the pious Pharisee looked on the Law as God's moral discipline, we may even read without a smile of superiority a Rabbinic discussion on the legality of eating an egg laid on the Sabbath. To remain

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stationary on the Sabbath is clearly an impossibility. What then is the limit of a journey permitted on that day? On themes such as these, and many others much loftier and more important, it was the business of the Scribes to give oracular utterances and decisions. Thus an ever-growing set of traditions grew up around the original Mosaic law. These were codified and recorded by the Scribes. Their work may aptly be compared to the way in which the decisions of the judges on the bench in our own legal system both interpret and apply the law in connection with actual cases that arise, and in the process make new laws. It is easy to understand what an oppressive burden the accumulation of such traditional interpretations would bind on the shoulders of men. The written law, with its humaneness and breadth, would be submerged, and even tend to become of subordinate authority. The later Pharisaism could even go so far as to say, "It is a sorer offence to teach things contrary to the ordinances of the Scribes, than to teach things contrary to the written law." The Sadducee, on the other hand, would have nothing to do either with Halachah or Haggadah, but his reason for so doing was simply moral indifference and the spirit of compromise. They were "men-pleasers" (Pss. Sol. iv. 8, 10). They, too, regarded the Law as the will of God, but were not scrupulous as to how that will might be done at every moment in life.

The Halachah, however, included more than the direction of common morality. It included questions of ceremonial cleanness or the opposite; also the proper fulfilment of the Temple dues. One remarkable development of Pharisaism was the way in which the Temple ceased to be the real centre of the national religion. Religious obligation towards the Temple came to consist in the payment of the



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appropriate revenues, and attendance at the various feasts. This was inevitable inasmuch as the conduct of the Temple-worship fell more and more into the hands of the Sadducees. It is remarkable how scanty is the use that Paul makes of the details of the Temple-worship, to illustrate his Christian teaching. This is all the more striking if we compare the elaborate use that is made in Hebrews of the Temple-ritual, as a fore-shadowing of Christian doctrine. It did not take long for the joy and zest—illustrated in many of the Psalms—with which the individual worshipper entered into the services of the Temple, its music and its sacrifices, to die away. The growing cleft between the Pharisees and the Sadducean priesthood made itself felt in the emphasis that was transferred from the Temple to the Synagogue, where the holy Book of the Law was read and expounded. The Pharisees did one supreme service to Jewish religion. Through their insistence on the Law as the daily guide in life (*cf.* Psalm cxix.), Scripture became no longer the possession of the priest, but of the laity. The whole tone, for example, of Psalm xl.<sup>1</sup> is illustrative in this connection.

Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in.  
Mine ears hast thou opened ;  
Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.  
Then said I, Lo, I am come ;  
In the roll of the Book it is written for my guidance ;  
I delight to do thy will, O my God ;  
Yea, thy law is within my heart.

Yet the Temple services were not neglected. Their due observance and attendance upon them were part of the written law ; yet they had sunk to be part of the tradition. While here and there some still penetrated with joy and religious insight behind the

<sup>1</sup>The Psalm is here regarded as belonging to the period after the Restoration.

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ritual, the tendency was to break loose inwardly from the worship, and to find an outlet for piety in the observance of the written law, "the volume of the book." The Synagogue, rather than the Temple, became the centre of real religious life. The extraordinary position was reached that morality, virtually, became the support of religion, and not *vice versa*. Notwithstanding that the tithes enjoined by the Pharisees went to the support of their Sadducean rivals in the priesthood, they were paid. In the Slavonic Book of Enoch, xlv. 2, it is said, "The Lord God needeth not bread nor light, neither food nor cattle, but thereby he trieth the heart of men." Similarly, the ceremonial law with its fundamental distinction between things clean and unclean, for which the ultimate sanction lay in the hands of the priests,<sup>1</sup> had become a matter either of pure mechanical obedience or of religious discipline. All sense of an inward relationship and significance in its demands had disappeared, at least so far as the prevailing tone of Pharisaism went. The Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai says, "Neither does the corpse make unclean, nor does water make clean, but the Holy One has said: I have laid down a law, and given a decision. Thou art not entitled to override my decision, which is written. This is a statute of my law."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the Law, as expanded and interpreted in the Halachah, included questions both of morality and of religious worship. It also included what we would call "law," as reduced to a codified system, and intended to safeguard the rights of the individual and of the community. The Law, in this aspect of it, dealt with marriage, rights of children and parents, of masters and slaves, rights of property,

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 44: Luke xvii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Bousset, "Religion des Judenthums," p. 149, cf. pp. 132 ff.

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the security of human life, and all other matters relating to the preservation of social relationships. The administration of the Law, in this sense, was in the hands of the Sanhedrin. Its prerogative was limited in the Roman period in certain respects, notably in the case of the infliction of the death penalty. The power held by the Sanhedrin is corroborated by the way in which the Roman officials in Acts more than once refused to deal with questions of purely Jewish law. In order to secure the condemnation of Jesus, He had to be proved guilty of high treason.

The *Haggadah*, or "Teaching," was another clearly marked region of scribal activity. It was meant to meet the more spiritual needs of men. Its most characteristic form is found in the ascription of a dual meaning to Scripture, an allegorising of the written narrative. Sometimes it involved the recording of certain mythical additions that had attached themselves. Paul himself makes use of the results and methods of this Haggadah at several points in his Epistles. For example, the veil on the face of Moses (2 Cor. iii. 13) is an addition to the narrative of the Pentateuch, and is applied by Paul in a figurative sense to Israel's blindness. Similarly, we may note the Haggadic interpretation in 1 Cor. x. 1-5, of certain incidents of the wilderness journey. Here Paul superimposes a Christian Haggadah on a Jewish, carrying back the idea of the Christian sacraments into the experience of the chosen people.<sup>1</sup> Paul makes use of the Rabbinical legend that the water-bearing rock accompanied the Israelites on their journey. Philo also made use of this fable in application to the Logos.<sup>2</sup> He identifies it with the pre-existent Christ Himself. A similar Haggadic usage is apparent in the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> "Legg. Alleg.," ii. § 2f.

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interpretation of the story of Sarah and Hagar as representing the two covenants (Gal. iv. 21 ff).

If we realise that this theory of life was, for Paul, both a spiritual inheritance and a *Weltanschauung*, and that he was trained in the Rabbinical schools in this conception of the all-embracing Law of God, which demanded the minutest obedience as representing His will for Israel and for the Gentile world, we shall be enabled to do homage to the spiritual genius that had the daring, in obedience to Christian faith, to throw off the mighty yoke, and to proclaim the great principle of spiritual freedom. We shall also be better able to understand the origin of his persecuting zeal against the Christians, inasmuch as he regarded their doctrine as subversive of all that his patriotism taught him was fundamental to the existence of his nation. Such a system left no conceivable room for the Cross. It will also explain the fact that his Christian individuality was not entirely marked by a complete severance from Pharisaic modes of thought. "The Law,"—so his mature judgment in Romans expresses itself—"is not sin." "The Law is spiritual." It had a work to do, in the providence of God, if only of temporary validity.

In two directions in particular his unique individuality asserted itself. One is the manner in which he stoutly contested the claim of the Judaisers, that every Gentile must submit to the rite of circumcision, and to other claims of the Law, ere he could become a Christian. The other is the way in which, even in pre-Christian days, he seems to have gone much deeper than the meaningless casuistry of the Halachah; and to have apprehended the things that mattered, "the weightier matters of the law." In this regard, he probably owed much to the teaching of Gamaliel; probably, also, a great

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deal more to his own moral earnestness and native insight. Paul was not of the Pharisaic type that tithed "mint, dill, and cummin" to the exclusion of justice, righteousness, and mercy. There are indications in Pharisaism that in some quarters stress was laid on the inward disposition.<sup>1</sup> The inwardness of many of the psalms, written by Pharisees, and the teaching of Jeremiah about the New Covenant had their effect. In the broader Rabbinic school, represented among others by Hillel and Gamaliel, such utterances as the following were rife. "What thou wilt not should happen to thee, that do not thou to any other." "Love thy neighbour as thyself." "Thy *mind* must be directed to goodness."<sup>2</sup> Similarly Paul, in his zeal for the Law seems to have gone down to the deep essential principles of it in determining the conduct of his own life. It is the demand made by one of the original Ten Commandments that he chooses to illustrate the whole nature of his moral struggle in pre-Christian days: "Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. vii. 7).

The very generality which characterises Paul's quotation of the Tenth Commandment here, the absence of the objects it is forbidden to covet, mentioned in Exodus xx. 17 in detail, indicates that his struggle is centred in the feeling itself. He found it impossible to conquer a feeling by attempted obedience to a legal precept. He is at one with the finer souls in Pharisaism in laying stress on the importance of the inward disposition, but he found it vain to cleanse the heart by obedience to statutory

<sup>1</sup> There are indications in Rom. vii. 9f that Paul experienced a moral awakening some time before his conversion: a moment when mechanical obedience was succeeded by a sense of the "spirituality" of the Law.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Bousset, *op. cit.* p. 159

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religion. It is at this point that Paul begins to make his escape from Pharisaism; but always, as he struggles to do so, the conviction that the Law is God's will for men closes in upon him and holds him in its toils. On the keeping of the Law depended his own salvation in the great Day of Judgment. On that, too, depended the national fortunes of Israel. If the nation was ever to recover its freedom, empire, and pre-eminence among the nations; if ever the national worship was to be restored in all its sincerity and splendour, the Law must be perfectly obeyed. Can we wonder that the struggle in Paul's soul was so fierce and so intense? On the one side was ranged the moral earnestness that convinced him that sin was firmly entrenched in his human personality. "When the commandment came, sin sprang to life, and I died." On the other, appeared the belief in the divinity of the Law, which pervaded every fibre of his being as an individual and as a member of the nation. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD—*The Two Worlds*.—In the writings of Paul we frequently meet the phrases, "this world," "this present world." Once he speaks of "the god of this world," strangely described by Mr. Montefiore as "the most un-Jewish phrase in Paul."<sup>1</sup>

As a rule, the Greek word translated "world" is *aeon*. There is implied in Paul's thought another "aeon" belonging to the future. Our English "world" hardly expresses the meaning. What is really meant is the present as contrasted with the future "age" or "order of things." We are in the presence of a fundamental principle of apocalyptic thought, the two "ages," or "worlds."

<sup>1</sup> "Judaism and St. Paul," p. 135.



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As a result of the deep disappointment experienced by the Pharisees in the hopes they had once centred on the Maccabæan dynasty, there arose a deep pessimism regarding the possibility of the complete fulfilment of the Law under the existing order of things. The more intense the devotion to the Law, and the deeper the moral earnestness, the more eager was the craving for another "age" in which the will of God shall be perfectly accomplished, and a new "order of things" revealed. This present "age" was regarded as wholly bad and doomed to destruction. The apocalyptic conception of the two aeons is really a development of prophecy. The prophets had foretold a time in the future, when the House of David would be restored to its ancient glory, when there would be no more oppression of the poor, and kings should reign in righteousness. All the nations of the earth were to have their share in the glory of Israel, and all men would acknowledge Jehovah. Even the world of nature would be transformed. The earth would yield abundant fruit, and the desert blossom as the rose. The fierce instincts of the wild beasts would be changed into gentleness. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb." Sorrow and sighing and pain would be done away. There would be new heavens and a new earth. Men would "repent," and turn to God.<sup>1</sup>

The literature of Israel that deals with the coming "age" is usually called "apocalyptic." Apocalyptic really occupies the same position with regard to prophecy, that Halachah and Haggadah occupy in relation to the Mosaic law. Both developments are the product of the same mentality. It is untrue to regard apocalyptic as a spiritual reaction against the mechanical

<sup>1</sup> Is. xi. 6; xxxv. 10; lxxv. 17; xxv. 9.

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obedience demanded by the Law. It was no avenue of escape for mystical minds from the legal yoke. Paul, the Pharisee, in his pre-Christian days was both devoted to the Law, and moving in an atmosphere of apocalyptic thought. Apocalyptic is simply the application of Rabbinical method to prophetic material, with no essential difference in its spirit and aim, as compared with legalism.<sup>1</sup> The main difference between apocalyptic and prophecy is, that while the future predicted by the prophets is the present world transformed by the manifestation of the power of God, the apocalypticist looked for a new order of things involving the entire destruction of the old order. To him the present order of things is morally and spiritually bankrupt. It is a cycle of the world's history that will soon come to an end, giving place to a new, wherein pain and evil, sorrow and death, will be no more. This new "aeon" is to come suddenly, and will appear as by an act of miracle. And it will come soon. The intervention and judgment of God are at the door. Men can do nothing to hasten its coming. They must wait. There are certain signs and warnings of the approaching end. For example, the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, foretold by the prophets as heralds of the great Day of the Lord; the "wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke" (Joel ii. 30, 31), reappear in the apocalyptic writings, with additions, and in more lurid and fantastic forms. They are the prelude to the entry of the new aeon. It is remarkable that the expression, "Kingdom of God" appears very seldom in the extant apocalyptic literature.<sup>2</sup> The use instead of the term "aeon" (Heb. *'ôlām*), indicates the breach

<sup>1</sup> cf. E. F. Scott, "The Kingdom and the Messiah," p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> e.g., 1 Enoch xli. f. lii. 4; Pss. Sol. v. 21; Ass. Mos. x. i.

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with the prophetic conception, that the present world will be transformed, and that there are redemptive forces now at work to this end. The Day of the Lord becomes the Day of Judgment, which tends to be identified with the destruction of the world (Enoch i. 6f.).

The cosmological significance attaching to the Kingdom of God and the Messianic age in the prophets is still further intensified in apocalyptic. At the same time, the national interest is still predominant. The new "age" or "world-order" is for the sake of the "elect" or "remnant" in Israel. The Gentile is not absolutely excluded, but he will take a secondary place in the kingdom. Any rights or privileges he may have will be given him through the chosen people.

In the thought of Paul the contrast of the two "ages" is very prominent. He, however, does not use "aeon" (except in Ephes. ii. 7) of the future age. This is included in the *parousia* or "appearing" of Jesus Christ. His apocalyptic ideas are modified to a great extent by his Christianity, as we shall see, but the basis of his thought on these matters (as of the thought of Jesus,<sup>1</sup> and of the primitive Church), is still the conception of the two world-orders. The present age is drawing to an end. It is not devoid of redemptive forces at work in it. In primitive Christianity, therefore, the apocalyptic idea is again

<sup>1</sup> The controversy as to the real significance of the apocalyptic element in the teaching of Jesus cannot be entered upon here. The position of the present writer is that Jesus undoubtedly made use of the apocalyptic ideas of His time, but profoundly modified and refashioned them. Jesus preferred the prophetic conception of the Kingdom of God, instead of "aeon," and restored the idea of redemptive forces already at work. The Kingdom is both present and future, and is inextricably bound up with His own person. On this matter, the Fourth Gospel must not be rejected as a source for the consciousness of Jesus.

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combined with the ancient prophetic idea. The Kingdom of God is already at work among men. Men have the earnest of their future inheritance already, in the gift of the Spirit. Paul's thought, however, is governed by his eschatological conception. As the years went on, he was compelled to modify his expectation of the nearness of the Parousia. The important point to remember, is that in Paul, for the most part, the future aeon is emptied of its traditional apocalyptic content. The person of Jesus Christ, His expected return in power and glory, and its accompaniments, occupy the whole space.

3. MESSIANIC HOPES.—It is necessary to make some attempt to understand the nature of the Messianic hope that possessed the soul of Paul the Pharisee. The Messianic hopes of contemporary Pharisaism are an extraordinary blend of the prophetic and the apocalyptic. The disappointment engendered by the failure of the Maccabæan dynasty to fulfil the hopes of a Messiah of David's race, and of a restoration of the theocracy in a perfect form, led to a revival of the expectation and longing for the Davidic Messiah, the "Son of David." On the other hand, there sprang up in later Jewish thought a belief in a heavenly figure, called the Son of Man. Probably the conception is originally of foreign origin, and represents an idea in Jewish thought that is due to contact with other systems, like the Babylonian.<sup>1</sup> It appears for the first time in the Book of Daniel, where, however, the writer applies it to the whole nation. The vision of Chapter vii. is the earliest known Jewish apocalypse proper. There the nation of Israel is represented by a human figure, "one like unto a son of man," as against the representa-

<sup>1</sup> cf. H. Gressmann, "Ursprung der Israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie," pp. 360 f.

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tion of the heathen kingdoms over which Israel receives dominion, by beasts. In the Book of Enoch, however, the Son of Man appears as a personal heavenly being, who is also the "elect one" or Messiah (xlvi. 1-6; lxii. 2-14; lxix. 29). He is of supernatural origin. There can be little doubt that Jesus, in His use of the title, derived it from Daniel, and attaches Himself to such subsequent interpretations of the passage in Daniel, as we find in Enoch. Paul nowhere applies the title "Son of Man" to Jesus, but he represents Him as appearing at the Parousia with the accompaniments of the Son of Man (1 Thess. iv. 16; 2 Thess. i. 7). Elsewhere he speaks of the "Man from Heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 45-49), but it is unlikely that Paul here regards the "Man" as pre-existent. The interpretation of this passage, however, is still in dispute.<sup>1</sup>

These two lines of the Messianic hope, the prophetic and the apocalyptic are seen running through the whole history of Pharisaic thought. The Messiah however, is by no means a necessary and integral conception in apocalyptic thought. To most of the writers the Messianic idea is of secondary importance.<sup>2</sup> It may be said with truth that only in

<sup>1</sup> Paul is certainly thinking of the duplicate narrative of Genesis i. and ii., but there is no certainty that he distinguishes, as Philo does, the "man after the image of God," and the "man of the dust of the earth." The words of v. 46 might conceivably be interpreted as aimed expressly at Philo's exegesis, but there is no real necessity so to interpret them. Paul is engaged in contrasting the creation of the first man, and the exaltation of Jesus who is now the "Man from heaven." His humanity is now a heavenly humanity and union with Him means that our mortal body becomes a spiritual body, and invested with immortality.

<sup>2</sup> It is found only in Enoch, The Sibylline Oracles, the Apocalypses of Baruch and Esdras, the Psalms of Solomon, and The Testaments. In 4 Esdras, vii. 28 ff. the Messiah is even said to die at the close of the *interim*-kingdom: in other words, his function is at an end.

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the Similitudes of Enoch<sup>1</sup>, and the concluding Psalms of Solomon, do we find the figure of the Messiah occupying a really central place. In the thought, however, of later Judaism, the prophetic figure of the Son of David, and the apocalyptic Son of Man are blended. The tendency was to regard the looked for Son of David as already in being, kept in mysterious custody by the Almighty, and ready to be revealed at the appointed time. One interesting result of the mingling of conceptions is seen in the development of the ideas of an *interim* rule of the Messiah on earth, which evidently has its origin in the desire to fulfil the promises connected with the hope of a political Messiah. It is possible that the idea of the *interim* kingdom makes itself felt in the thought of 1 Cor. xv. 23-28.<sup>2</sup> The "Son of David" idea is prominent in the primitive Christian preaching, and has already attached to it apocalyptic ideas. The whole passage, Acts ii. 29-36, is notable in this connection; Jesus is both Lord and Christ. The Pharisaic conception of the Messiah was, of course, profoundly altered by the interpretation given to the facts of the Christian Gospel, and especially to the sufferings of the Messiah. So far as can be ascertained, Jewish Messianic thought in New Testament times had no place whatever for the sufferings of the Messiah. Jesus, or the Christian Messiah, is represented as passing through the sufferings of death, and as being exalted to "the right hand of God," the place of power, in the Resurrection. He has sent the "Spirit" to His Church, according to the promise (Acts ii. 33). He Himself is kept in heaven until the period of the restoration, which corresponds

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. 37-71 of the Book of Enoch are usually known as "The Similitudes."

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 114f.



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to Paul's Parousia (Acts iii. 21). The Christian apologetic for a suffering Messiah was an appeal to the Suffering Servant passages in the prophets, like Isaiah liii.—an appeal which had been made by Jesus Himself. Hitherto, these passages had been interpreted of the nation, and not of the Messiah. The Messiah, himself, was no doubt a supernatural figure—more than human, yet subordinate in all things to God. His mission was to restore the outward prosperity of the Jewish State. The stress that is laid on his ethical qualities is very remarkable:

"He himself also is pure from sin, so that he may rule a mighty people, and rebuke princes and overthrow sinners by the might of his word."<sup>1</sup>

"He shall not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor shall he multiply unto himself gold and silver for war, nor by ships shall he gather confidence for the day of battle."<sup>2</sup>

The source of his irresistible power is found in his ethical purity. Yet he is wholly dependent upon God. "God hath appointed him" (Pss. Sol. xvii. 47). "The Lord himself is his king" (xvii. 38). He acts solely as the representative of God. "When he has enacted his part in the inauguration of the new age, he effaces himself altogether, and leaves the kingdom to God."<sup>3</sup>

4. THE SPIRIT WORLD.—The Pharisees' doctrine of the invisible spirit-world can be traced throughout all Paul's writings. It is peopled with angels and demonic powers. The late Pharisaic belief in angels is a development of the kind of thought on the subject, which we find especially in the exilic and post-exilic writings of the Old

<sup>1</sup> Pss. Sol. xvii. 41; cf. Test. Levi. xxviii.; Judah, xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Pss. Sol. xvii. 37.

<sup>3</sup> E. F. Scott, "The Kingdom and the Messiah," p. 53.

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Testament, reinforced by an influx of Persian and Babylonian conceptions. The tendency in Jewish religious thought, as it advanced, was to increase the distance between God and the world. His relations with the world and with men were conducted by means of "angels."<sup>1</sup> In Zechariah for example, the prophet has to do almost entirely with angels, and not directly with God. They are, in the post-exilic psalms, God's messengers. Even the forces of nature are really "angels:"

Who maketh His messengers of the winds,  
His ministers of the flaming fire.

(Psalm civ. 4.)

The stars also, came to be regarded as "angels." (Judges v. 20 ; Job xxxviii. 7 ; Neh. ix. 6 ; cf. Rev. ix. 1, 11). The angels are also said to rule the nations (Deut. iv. 19, xxxii. 8). Jehovah Himself is the Ruler of Israel. In Daniel, Michael is the guardian-angel of Israel. The idea of the stars as living beings underlies the thought of 1 Cor. xv. 40ff. In later Jewish thought the elements are personified as angels. These are the *stoicheia* or elemental spirits referred to in Col. ii. 8, 10, 15 and Gal. iv. 3, 9. They are the forces represented by fire, wind, darkness, hail, the seasons, dawn, and evening (cf. Rev. xiv. 18, xvi. 5). Their worship was creeping into the Gentile Church, through the observance of "days, months, seasons, years," as enacted in the Law, and interpreted by Hellenistic thought.

It has to be remembered that contemporary Hellenism was rich in this belief in spirits and demons.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that in the Priestly Code, one of the three main documents out of which the Pentateuch is constructed, no reference is made to angels. It has been conjectured that the omission is due to a desire to antagonise the doctrine in ecclesiastical circles. Thus the Sadducees in their rejection of angels would represent the main ecclesiastical tradition on the subject (cf. p. 39).

<sup>2</sup> See T. R. Glover, "Conflict of Religions," pp. 94-102.

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The science of astrology also made itself felt. The movements of the heavenly bodies were chiefly interesting to the Hellenistic mind, in so far as they affected the destinies of individuals for weal or for woe. The Universe was charged with "animism." Tides and earthquakes, birth and death, the whole range of human destiny, might be measured or foretold, did men only understand the motions of the sun, moon, and stars. Even Stoicism succumbed to the invincible pressure of demonology upon the popular mind. Diaspora Judaism, also, did not remain unaffected. The Rabbis came to teach that the law was given by angels, and some held that the angels were jealous because the divine law was committed to men. The "angels of the seven churches" in Revelation are the spirits to whose care they were entrusted by God.

It is no doubt historically true to say that in Jewish thought there is no reference to evil spirits as such, but that "the angels are instruments to effect Yahveh's will. They are good or evil not in virtue of intrinsic character, but of the mission on which they may be sent. The 'angels of evil' who bring the plagues on Egypt (Psalm lxxviii. 49), the 'destroyer' who smites the first-born (Exodus xii. 23), the evil spirit that troubles Saul, the angel that slays the Israelities (2 Samuel xxiv. 16, 17), or Sennacherib's army with the pestilence, the lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets, the cynical Satan who smites Job . . . all alike belong to the heavenly host, and are God's servants, who live to do His will. They are evil so far as their mission is to inflict evil."<sup>1</sup> That, however, is only to push back the problem of evil on another, which is more difficult of solution,—the divine permiss-

<sup>1</sup> A. S. Peake, "Expositor's Greek Testament," IV., p. 480. See his admirable discussion of this subject, *ib.* pp. 478ff.

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ion of evil. The Jew did not regard it as an indictment on the moral character of God to say, "Shall there be evil in a city, and Jehovah hath not done it?" (Am. iii. 6.) Rather for him it was an intellectual necessity, in order to preserve intact the conception of Jehovah's sovereignty; to afford Him the means of punishing sin, and of sending chastisement. To state the position, however, in an absolute way, as Peake does, creates difficulty regarding such passages as those describing the immorality of the sons of God in Genesis vi. 1-4; or the punishment of the host of the high ones for the wrongs done by the kingdoms committed to their charge (Isaiah xxiv. 21). The angels are not sinless, or even morally neutral. "Behold He putteth no trust in His servants, and His angels He chargeth with folly" (Job iv. 18).

In later Jewish theology the distinction between angels and demons is made explicit. Foreign influences are no doubt at work here, along with the dualism of apocalyptic thought, already spoken of. Also, a pessimistic conception of the power of sin and evil plays its part. Certainly Paul comes very near to a personification of sin, more than once,<sup>1</sup> and attributes evil in general to the activity of demons. He adopts the view as his own that women must not be unveiled, because of the lustful glances of the "angels" (1 Cor. xi. 10). "Angels" are not regarded by him as perfect beings, and he classes them with other evil powers. An angel from heaven might preach an erroneous gospel (Gal. i. 8). He uses the various names that were employed in later Jewish thought to denote the various classes of spiritual beings, "principalities," "powers," "thrones," "dominions," etc. (Col. i. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 24; Eph. iii. 10; Col. ii. 10, 15;

<sup>1</sup> p. 182.

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Romans viii. 38). All these are morally imperfect, inasmuch as they try to separate men from the love of God (Romans viii. 38); require to be put under Christ's feet (1 Cor. xv. 24); "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 6-8).<sup>1</sup> Jesus, in His crucifixion, despoiled them, and destroyed their power. He nailed to the Cross the ordinances of the law which they had mediated—an idea which is an adaptation of the view that the Law was promulgated by angels. Paul, as a Christian, did not cease to believe in the existence of these angelic and demonic powers, but they had ceased to have any moral significance for him. He speaks of them with disrespect. They need salvation like any other created being (Col. i. 20).

The question naturally arises, how this belief in the existence of angels and demons is consistent with Jewish monotheism. One thing has to be remembered. They were regarded as created beings. Paul even says that Christ was the agent in their creation (Col. i. 16). How this coincides with His moral character is a question that Paul neither asks nor answers. The main fact is that they are *created*. Some of the Rabbis held that angels were created daily, and were transformed now into this, now into that. The transformation may even be spoken of as effected by themselves. "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14, Moffatt). As created beings they cannot contradict the doctrine of monotheism that God is uncreated. "In the beginning God created," implies that God has neither beginning of days nor end of years. Created beings are bound to have only an evanescent personality. They exist only so long as God wills them to be.

<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that the "rulers of this world" here referred to are not earthly rulers, but the demonic powers.

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Such was the environment of Pharisaic thought in which Paul moved, and was nurtured. The application and transformation to which these ideas are subjected in the development of his Christian thought, will appear in the subsequent pages. The Pharisaic views on Resurrection and Judgment which Paul inherited will appear in their proper context.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xiii.



## V

# JESUS

### (I) SOURCES OF PAUL'S CONCEPTION

IT would be impossible, in the space at our command, to enter fully into the modern theological question that is usually stated in the form of an alternative, "Jesus or Paul." The matter at issue may be stated thus: "Did Paul succeed in imposing upon Christianity a conception of the Person of Jesus, which originated with himself, and is the product of his own thought? Did he merely reflect upon the facts of his own subjective experience, aided by Pharisaic conceptions of the Messiah?" If anyone is disposed to answer these questions in the affirmative, he pays a tribute to the influence of a single human personality unprecedented in the history of religions. In that case, Paul and not Jesus is the founder of the Christian religion. Such a conclusion, however, is entirely at variance with the consciousness and claims of Paul himself, and completely inconsistent with his own attitude of obedience and adoration towards Jesus. Robert Louis Stevenson somewhere speaks of his characters as rising up and walking away from him. Nowhere, however, in literature do we meet with the phenomenon that a character, largely imaginary, makes the bad man, who is its author, good; or gives his guilty conscience peace; or induces him to worship it. At the same time, when we pass from the Jesus of the Synoptics to the Jesus of Paul's writings, we seem to enter an entirely new atmosphere. It is quite possible, however, seriously to exaggerate the magnitude

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of the change. There are utterances and claims of Jesus recorded in the Synoptic Gospels—as for example, Matt. xi. 25ff., or the claim to forgive sins (Mark ii. 5ff. xi. 5), or the utterance in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16) which to say the very least, are by no means exhausted in anything that Paul claims of Him. They all affirm the central significance of His own Person. Moreover, it is certain that the teaching of the Fourth Gospel is historically not so baseless as we are sometimes led to believe. We feel, however, that Paul approaches Jesus from another direction than the Synoptic or Johannine writers. Their aim is to reproduce faithfully the historical facts about Jesus, as these existed in the primitive tradition, oral or written; to preserve His deeds and utterances, and to furnish records of His death and resurrection. They write, indeed, from the standpoint of those who are in living touch with the risen Christ—no New Testament writer does otherwise; and the writings are coloured by theological reflection.<sup>1</sup> Paul writes from this standpoint also, but as one who has received his gospel direct from the risen Jesus Himself. “The gospel that I preach is not a human affair; no man put it into my hands, no man taught me what it meant, I had it by a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. i. 11, 12, Moffatt). Further on in the same chapter he says, “It pleased God to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him to the Gentiles.” (Gal. i. 16).

Paul's conversion experience is the source of his conception of the person of Jesus. As we shall see later, he is by no means ignorant of the facts recorded concerning Jesus of Nazareth, but he

<sup>1</sup> The distinction in this respect between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics can no longer be maintained except as one of degree. Theological reflection, based on personal experience, predominates more largely in the Fourth Gospel.

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nowhere makes it his business either to record the life or to expound the teaching of Jesus. His business is to open up the message of His death and resurrection, and to tell men what Christ was in His real nature, especially what He had proved to be to himself. The knowledge of Jesus first came to Paul in a fashion entirely unique. As we read the Synoptics, and indeed the Fourth Gospel as well, we are made to feel that it had been first of all the surpassing moral and spiritual power of Jesus of Nazareth, His knowledge of God and His love for men, the wisdom of His teaching and the charm of His personality, the "following" of Him by His disciples in friendly intercourse and in sympathetic thought, that had been the beginning of faith in the risen Jesus. The divine honours they paid Him were due to the impression of His personality while on earth, vindicated and realised in the Resurrection and at Pentecost. "These men not only follow Jesus in His travels up hill and down dale, but they follow Him in the fluxes and refluxes of His thought, in all His experience, sometimes afar off and sometimes very near Him. 'Ye are they,' He says, 'which have continued with me in my temptations'—one of the most striking expressions in the New Testament. . . . They watch Him in every mind and mood; and wonder, as Plato, said is the mother of philosophy. They study Him the closer, and come gradually nearer to realising the way in which He sees and feels."<sup>1</sup> They are constrained to ask, "Who is this?" The answer is the New Testament conception of the person of Christ.

Their intimacy was not interrupted by, but consummated in the Resurrection. They slipped into

<sup>1</sup> T. R. Glover, "The Nature and Purpose of a Christian Society," pp. 48 f.

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it; Paul received it in one decisive and blinding moment. It was not for him, as for them, the re-appearance of a friend who had been dead, and was alive again. It was the revelation of a new friend to one who had been his bitterest enemy. The coming of Jesus to Paul was for him from the very first a miracle of God's favour, or "grace"; the winning of his heart—an unexampled display of power. The experience could only be the work of God; for it gave him what he had long been seeking—rest of soul, peace of conscience, a free forgiveness, and a love that was also an inexhaustible source of moral power. It may easily be misleading, simply to equate the significance of Paul's conversion with the conversion of any other man. There are obvious similarities, but the incident on the Damascus road has never actually been repeated in history. Paul himself gives it a place among the Resurrection appearances (1 Cor. xv. 7 *cf.* 1 Cor. ix. 1). "In 1 Corinthians we have, not only the oldest record, but the solitary document in which a known individual tells us in so many words, I saw the risen Lord."<sup>1</sup> Nowhere does Paul put forward his own experience on the Damascus road as a norm for the experience of his converts. There he became not only a Christian, but what was far more, an Apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentile world. In his heart was born the message of a divine gospel for the whole world.

Fundamentally Paul is in agreement with the judgment of the primitive community regarding the person of Jesus. "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." (Acts ii. 36). In the primitive preaching, Jesus is "Lord," a name applied to Jehovah in

<sup>1</sup> B. W. Bacon, "The Story of St. Paul," p. 45.

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the Old Testament. He is also Messiah. It is by His Resurrection that the place of Messiah is openly given Him. He is the fulfilment of Jewish national and religious hopes, but in a manner undreamt of by Jewish thought. The facts of death and resurrection, which the disciples of Jesus while He was on earth found it so hard to reconcile with the consciousness of one whom they already acknowledged as Messiah, have now taken their place without difficulty in their thoughts of the exalted Jesus. To borrow Johannine language, it was expedient for them that He should go away. He has restored their broken intimacy with Him by the gift of the Spirit, and He will return again shortly in fulness of power to establish His Kingdom. Meantime His power over death and sin and all the similar powers of evil, which cause sickness and persecution at the hands of the authorities, is present with them, and in them. Filled with the Spirit, men proclaimed the momentous good tidings of salvation from all these things, and their message was corroborated by facts. Their invincible courage, and the results of their preaching were open even to the eyes of their enemies. In Acts iv. 13*f.*, the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the facts of the case, as it was brought before the Sanhedrin, is emphasised in a very remarkable way. The bold and fluent speech of Peter and John; the fact, apparent in their dress and style of utterance, that they were untrained scholars; the fact already known that they had been "with Jesus" (in other words among Jesus' disciples), and had once shared in the panic and depression consequent on the crucifixion; the man who had been healed standing beside them—in face of those facts even the judges were silent. Luke means us to under-

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stand that only one conclusion could be drawn, which yet the authorities dared not draw; namely, that the relationship with Jesus Christ was unbroken, and that He still communicated to His servants His own power.<sup>1</sup> Jesus' position as Saviour is already absolute (Acts iv. 12).

Wherein does Paul's conception of the risen Jesus differ, if at all, from that just sketched as belonging to the primitive community? He too, calls Him "Lord" and "Christ." He too, believes that Jesus of Nazareth was "the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared<sup>2</sup> to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead" (Romans i. 4). These words may be regarded as the gateway through which Paul's idea of Jesus must always be approached, and as his immediate point of contact with the primitive faith. For him, as for the whole apostolic Church, the Resurrection was the setting free of Jesus from the limitations of the earthly life that His power might be unhindered and untrammelled. It is the power of the exalted Christ that is the basis of his gospel. That power, "the power of his resurrection" (Phil. iii. 10) was demonstrated in his own "apprehension" on the Damascus road.

Wherein, then, consists the original element which Paul introduced into the conception of Jesus? It certainly does not consist in the idea of the Divinity or Godhead of Jesus Christ. Already the faith and worship that belong to God alone were given to Him. There is no speculation, properly

<sup>1</sup> cf. W. M. Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller," pp. 370 f.

<sup>2</sup> The idea is that what Jesus was before, is now made clear and manifest, with an underlying sense that He has entered on His new office.



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speaking, on the person of Jesus in the primitive Church. There are no incursions into the region of pure metaphysics even in Paul. Greek philosophy had not yet become the handmaid of religious thought. Both Paul and his predecessors are simply bent on expressing, under certain forms of thought, what Jesus had come to mean for them, *religiously*. When they say that Jesus is the Christ, they mean two things: (1) that Jesus is King, and that, in His own person, He shares God's rule of mankind (Acts x. 36); (2) that Jesus is the person through whom God's rule is exercised and His kingdom comes; and that in Him all God's promises to the world, through the Jewish nation, are fulfilled. "How many soever are the promises of God, in Him is the yea" (2 Cor. i. 20). In the view of the primitive Church, they are in part fulfilled now, in the gift of the Spirit. Jesus and the Father are one source, from which the Spirit comes for the salvation of men. The outward token of salvation is repentance<sup>1</sup> and forgiveness of sin, and is the necessary prelude to the period that is imminent when Jesus Himself appears, the time of the Great Restoration, in which all promises and hopes will be perfectly fulfilled (Acts iii. 21).

Essentially, this is the religious conception of Jesus which we find in Paul. Practically, Paul goes much beyond it; and we shall find that the reason of the advance is to be found in the unique nature of his religious experience, both before, and at the moment of the appearance of Jesus to him on the Damascus road. If Paul says more about the person of Jesus than Peter, it is because he has more to say. There is such a thing as

<sup>1</sup> In the primitive Church, by contrast with Paul, the crowning and all-inclusive sin is the crucifixion of Jesus (Acts iii. 14 15). It is due to Paul, with his depth of moral earnestness, that the conception of sin is both intensified, extended, and deepened.

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Paulinism. His own missionary work, his own inner experience and wider culture, his fuller human sympathy, made it possible for him to move in larger regions of thought. He was compelled to bring the risen Jesus into relationship in his thought, with God, the Law, the Church, and the Universe.

It was a necessity of his nature to think out these relationships for himself.<sup>1</sup> We must remember certain things about Paul. Unlike the earlier disciples, a radical transformation took place, through the appearance of Jesus to him, in his conceptions of these four governing facts of life. The early disciples had heard the doctrine of God's Fatherhood from the lips of Jesus Himself, or from those who had heard Him speak. They had no real moral difficulty with the Law, interpreted as Jesus interpreted it, and rescued from mere externality. The Universe to them was not quite the fearsome and disquieting environment that it became to a thinker like Paul, versed in Rabbinic doctrines of angels and demons. They were not confronted with contemporary Hellenistic ideas of its vast spaces, through which men had to find their toilsome way to God, as Paul must have been both in his training under Gamaliel, and in his missionary work. The Church, also, was a greater thing to Paul than merely a remnant of Israel according to grace, supplemented by an ingathering of Gentile proselytes. It had burst the bonds of Jewish nationality. It is therefore no wonder that the power with which Paul believed, in common with them, the risen Christ was endowed, the spiritual sway that He exercised as Lord, demanded a richer content, to correspond with its task. Paul's aim was to secure for Christ, in a wider moral and intellectual world, that solitary and incommunicable

<sup>1</sup> Moffatt, "Paul and Paulinism," p. 33.

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place in men's faith, which from the beginning the Church assigned Him, and must assign Him still.

How is this result achieved? We may at the outset glance at two points of view which are held. Neither is wholly false, but neither succeeds in accounting for the Pauline conception of Jesus.

1. It is held that Paul simply applies to Jesus the prerogatives attaching in contemporary Jewish thought to the person of the Messiah. It is contended that the Messiah had already come to be regarded as a being of divine nature, who was already in existence, and was kept by God in heaven until the time was ripe for his appearing or "revelation;" and that Paul simply transferred the idea to the risen Jesus. The vogue that this interpretation has had, chiefly in Germany, is amazing, especially in view of two facts. The first is that we know practically nothing of the pre-Christian Messianic conceptions as a consistent whole; and in the second place what we do know, enables us to see quite clearly that the Messiah is not always present in the descriptions of the future kingdom.<sup>1</sup> When he is mentioned, the conception of his person falls far short of the Christ of the Christian Church. Even in Daniel vii., the Son of Man there spoken of is no personal figure, but a personification of the nation (*e.g.*, Daniel vii. 18). The "Son of David"—who was the political hero of the hope—was not regarded as a divine personality.

Instead of a supernatural being who, when he has done his part, effaces himself altogether, we have in Paul a Messiah, who is Son of God in the fullest and most exclusive sense, Head of the Church, and Lord of the Universe. Moreover as regards the ideas of the condescension and voluntary impoverishment of the pre-existent Son, represented

<sup>1</sup> pp. ff

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in the Incarnation (Phil. ii. 1-10), and of the central place Paul everywhere gives to the Death of Jesus, nowhere can even their rudiments be detected in Judaistic Christology. No Jewish thinker ever dared to connect the power of forgiving sins with the Messiah. That belonged to God alone. It is strange that the theory here mentioned should ever have been put forward at all, in face of Paul's own words in 2 Cor. v. 16, properly interpreted. "The Christ after the flesh" means undoubtedly his Messianic conception before the conversion—now completely superseded. We have only to read the following verse to see that Paul's Christ is no creation of human thought, but Himself its Creator. Paul's Christ is a life-giving Spirit. It is not for a moment to be denied that Paul, as we shall see, expressed his thoughts of Jesus' person, as indeed of the new religion generally, in Jewish forms. He may even have made use of the Alexandrian Logos conception. It is a very different thing to assert that the divine nature and cosmic place of Jesus Christ were Jewish ideas, super-imposed by Paul on the Jesus of history. The most that can be predicated of certain apocalyptic conceptions of Messiah is that he is a supernatural, not a divine being. The highest function that is assigned him, as in Enoch, is that of judge.

2. An equal care needs to be exercised in applying the view that Paul's conception of Jesus was a gradual development, in response to apologetic needs that emerged in the course of controversy, notably in Galatians and in Colossians. It may very plausibly be argued that there is no trace in the New Testament of any disputes about the person of Jesus that may properly so be described. Paul can indeed speak of men who preached "another Jesus," or "another gospel;" yet the preach-

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ing apparently did not concern directly the "person," but rather threatened the place and significance of Jesus in the Christian's universe. At the same time, it cannot be denied that Paul is led to apply titles to Jesus in Colossians that would have been out of place in the Galatian controversy. Yet even in Colossians, we feel that Paul is only filling with new content his view of that unshared place in his scheme of things, which he gives to Jesus from the very first. Already in Romans, where, more deliberately perhaps than in any other writing, Paul is expounding his theology, he imagines all creation, in its pain and travail, as looking expectantly towards Jesus (Rom. viii. 22). He means that all the pain and sorrow of the natural creation will find their significance in Jesus, the Redeemer of all created things. This is already to give Jesus a central place in the Universe, and differs only in expression from the doctrine of Colossians.

Paul's conception of Jesus springs from an inward sense of possession by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. To the Christ so experienced "he brings every thought into captivity" (2 Cor. x. 5). This Christ is identical with the historical Jesus, who died on the Cross for men's sin. "I did not think it fitting to play the philosopher among you. My one theme was Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2). Paul is no obscurantist. The intellectual daring of his thought about Jesus, as we shall see, negatives that supposition. What he does is simply to take up the only point of view from which the risen Jesus is visible, namely the standpoint of religious experience. He is, in the words just quoted from Corinthians, speaking to those who were but "babes in Christ," who had not reached that maturity for which alone speculation

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about the person of Jesus has any validity. God revealed "His Son in me" (Gal. i. 15). The story of the shame and horror of a crucified Christ, which he had once shrunk from with hatred and loathing, had suddenly become, in a blaze of light, a personal event in his own life. Jesus was "the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." "I am crucified with Christ." Paul is at any time incapable of purely academic thought. He is never able to hold Christ at arm's length, examine His claims, and weigh His personality. Christ's person and claims were once for all settled in the experience of that elemental power that "apprehended" or "grasped" him (Phil. iii. 12, 13). The raw material of his subsequent thought came to him unsought at his conversion. "I follow on if so be that I may grasp that with a view to which I also was grasped by Jesus Christ." Paul's "grasping" is not merely, or even chiefly, intellectual. For him the intellectual and the moral are never separated. The "things that are behind," which he "forgets," are not past stages of Christian experience, but the old pre-Christian life, with its guilty conscience and its "Christ after the flesh."<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that on the two occasions when Paul speaks clearly of the Incarnation, as an act of condescending love on the part of the Son of God, and gives us the clearest insight into his conviction that Jesus was divine, he is concerned to reinforce moral endeavour: to encourage a spirit of lowliness and love among the Philippians (ii. 5-10); and to invoke a spirit of generosity among the Corinthians (2 Cor. viii. 9). His motive in bringing forward his conception of the Incarnation in both cases is an ethical one.

<sup>1</sup> See H. A. A. Kennedy, "Expositor's Greek Testament" III., p. 458.



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Perhaps the most convincing proof, if proof be needed, that Paul gave to Jesus an absolute and determining place, equivalent to that of God Himself, in the Christian life, is to be found in the position occupied by the name of Jesus alongside that of the Father in the apostolic benedictions, which mostly preface, and sometimes conclude his letters. We may find equally conclusive proof in his attitude when any disposition is shown, as in the Corinthian church, to name the name of Christ as one in a list with Peter, Apollos, or himself (1 Cor. i. 12, 13). His vocation was given him, not through any human agency, but sprang from Christ Himself (Gal. i. 1). The source is not a human one at all, but is deliberately contrasted with what is human. As the originator of his apostleship, he sets Jesus instinctively side by side with God the Father. There was absolutely nothing, either in his Jewish heritage of thought, or in the thought of the time, that could possibly even have suggested such an intellectual *tour de force*. Jewish monotheism would have been against it, in spite of the semi-poetic personifications of Wisdom and the Word, which are found in extant Jewish literature. Hellenistic religion—in spite of scholars who have made rather hasty use of its terminology, and have sometimes offered single words as though they were arguments, for example, in favour of the conception of a “saviour-god”—affords no real parallels to the Christian, much less the Pauline, conception of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Even the Roman practice of deifying the emperor had far more a political than a religious significance, and was simply the apotheosis of force, symbolised in the person of the reigning emperor. The benefits he bestowed on his worshippers were

<sup>1</sup>e.g., Gilbert Murray, “Four Stages of Greek Religion,” pp. 143 f. But cf. Kennedy, “St. Paul and the Mystery Religions,” pp. 211 ff.

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such as a millionaire might shower on his dependents.<sup>1</sup> Deity in Graeco-Roman thought meant little more than an aristocratic kind of immortal being. A divine Being manifested in poverty and weakness is an entirely new idea.

In any case Paul had no opportunity, even if he had had the will, to raise the human Jesus to the status of a divine Being. Jesus was already a divine Being, when Paul first knew Him. Paul's greatest achievement of thought in regard to Christ is his insistence on His true humanity—on the Incarnation. It may be disconcerting to many to find that Paul nowhere speaks of Christ as "God." The only really doubtful passage is Romans ix. 5.<sup>2</sup> From what we know elsewhere of Paul's habit of thought, it would be a surprising thing if Christ were in the latter passage addressed as *Theos*. This simply means that it nowhere occurs to him, as a Jew, to speak of the relationship between God and Christ in a way that would be natural to a philosopher. In all his speculation on the person of Christ, the motive is religious and not philosophical. Jesus, in the Ritschlian phrase, has for Paul "the religious value of God." The relation between Jesus and God is for him not so much a question of *ousia* (essence), as of *exousia* (authority). His ruling category is "power" not "substance."

Under the influence of the Greek tradition, modern theology demands that the question be stated and answered exclusively in terms of essential being. The result is that the ordinary man has come to think of Jesus in terms that tend to make the

<sup>1</sup> cf. "Benefactor," Luke xxii. 25; also W. Warde Fowler, "Roman Ideas of Deity," pp. 107 ff., Gilbert Murray, *op. cit.* pp. 134-141.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Denney, Romans, "Expositor's Greek Testament"; Sanday and Headlam, Romans, *in loc.*

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idea of God religiously unnecessary. This is a fatal blemish on modern religion.<sup>1</sup> Ritschlianism is right when it speaks of Christ as having for us "the religious value of God." We simply have no knowledge of God that can be regarded as having real religious value, apart from Jesus. The Old Testament itself is largely a sealed book without the mind of Jesus. At the same time, Paul could not rest satisfied without seeking some explanation of a fact so stupendous as One who had for him the religious value of God.<sup>2</sup> A fact unrelated in our minds to other facts is so much mental cargo; and Paul proceeds to relate this great fact of Christ to other facts constantly present in his thought, and themselves having a place in his whole experience. These great facts are God, the Church, the Law, and the Universe. The relation to the Law will appear when we come to deal with the Pauline doctrines of justification and sanctification. In the chapters that immediately follow, the attempt will be made to gain some idea of Jesus in relation to the other three.

<sup>1</sup> *cf.* p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Emerson once said that Paul's exalted conceptions of Jesus "are but sallies of love and admiration, which in our ecclesiastical theology have been petrified into official titles that kill all generous sympathy and liking." (Quoted by D. Somerville, "St. Paul's Conception of Christ," p. 179.) *cf.* J. Denney, "Jesus and the Gospel," pp. 30f.

## VI

# JESUS

### (2) JESUS AND THE CHURCH

It is the usual practice, in dealing with the thought of Paul, to postpone the consideration of the "Church" until a much later stage. In a sense, this is correct procedure, and Paul's contribution to the idea of the Church as an outward organisation will be considered towards the close. The Church of Christ was for Paul, almost from the first, a fact as objective as Jesus Himself; the second greatest fact in the new life. He was accepted by, and was baptised into a community of men and women, who worshipped Christ, and felt themselves in living communion with Him. He came to them with a steadfast and independent conviction of the reality of the living Christ whom they worshipped. Unlike many of them, he had known only the exalted Christ. He found that the risen Jesus was making His power felt in the manifestations or "gifts" (*charismata*) of the Spirit within the Church. What these were may be gathered from the opening chapters in Acts, and in 1 Cor. The Spirit had always been associated with the coming of the Messianic age. The primitive Christian belief was that Jesus had full scope for the exercise of His Messianic power only after the Resurrection had taken place. "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath

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poured forth this which ye see and hear" (Acts ii. 33); yet, for Paul, what was "poured forth" had a far deeper content than that given to it by those who preceded him in the faith. The tendency in the primitive Church seems to have been to associate the work of the Spirit exclusively with certain ecstatic and extraordinary manifestations, such as speaking in tongues, great fervour in prayer. They might even take the form of sighings which had no words attached to them, "groanings that cannot be uttered;" prophesying; miraculous healings of the sick; sudden conversions among the heathen onlookers. Paul himself tells us that he too shared in these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. He had the gift of tongues, and was himself liable to ecstatic experiences (2 Cor. xii. 1 ff.). It was into a community with such an atmosphere that Paul was first introduced. It is remarkable that this community never seems to have regarded the work of the Spirit as connected with far-reaching changes in the moral code of believers. General adherence to the precepts of the Jewish law was, of course, demanded, and its abrogation was never contemplated. What moral deepening there was seems to have sprung from the expectation of the immediate advent of Jesus. Men are called on to repent, during the "breathing-space"<sup>1</sup> allotted to them ere the Lord came. Self-abnegation and self-sacrifice reigned. A spirit of "enthusiasm" prevailed. There was a disposition to give literal effect to the example and precept of Jesus and His circle of disciples. The community had a common purse, and many sold lands and houses and gave the proceeds to fill it. It is also important to note that in the story of Ananias and Sapphira the sin that is punished is not the retention of part of the

<sup>1</sup> Translated in our version "seasons of refreshing," Acts iii 19.

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property, but hypocrisy and insincerity. Evidently community of goods was not a rule binding on all. The actual deeds of Jesus were reproduced in the acts of His followers. Signs and wonders, chiefly in the form of miracles of healing, were wrought among the people (Acts v. 12ff). Their enthusiasm had also the added stimulus of persecution, and some, like Stephen, laid down their lives. Missionary activity began; and Peter seems to have heard the call of a mission to the Gentiles, which was inaugurated by a miraculous vision (Acts x.).

What place did Jesus Christ occupy in this primitive community? They lived in immediate expectation of His Advent, which was heralded by these outward and wondrous tokens. They were signs of the coming salvation. We may go on to ask "How did Paul with his fresh conception of the love and power of Jesus, react in this atmosphere?" It seemed to him an inadequate expression of all that Jesus meant to him. He shared their belief that He would quickly return in power, but one thing he could never forget. He never ceased to realise that the risen Jesus had already come to him in great power and glory, and had changed his whole life. It was essentially a profound moral revolution. Moreover, Jesus Himself, as He is now, had in person exercised His redeeming power on Paul. This accounts for the peculiar individuality of the contribution that he brought to the religious life and thought of the Christian community and to the conception of the Christian Church. "They saw the Resurrection against the lowly ministry with its still more lowly end; he viewed the earthly life in bold relief against the glory of ascension and pre-existence."<sup>1</sup> It was therefore both a religious and an intellectual

<sup>1</sup> H. R. Mackintosh, "Person of Christ," p. 64.



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necessity for Paul to give to the risen Jesus a place other than a waiting one in glory. The supreme supernatural facts in Paul's experience of Jesus, were not "visions and revelations" (2 Cor. xii. 1), extraordinary manifestations, but the power that could change the hatred of the persecutor into love for, and fellowship with the Christian brotherhood, which once he persecuted with relentless fury.

The result was an important development of the doctrine of the Spirit in the Pauline churches. The energy of the Spirit was identified with the working of the historical Christ, now risen. The range of the Spirit's working is commensurate with the whole of Christian life. Paul saw clearly the moral dangers that were involved in the exaltation to such a pre-eminent place in the religious life of the community, of these ecstatic and enthusiastic experiences. The danger lay in the tendency to regard moments of commonplace existence, and even of physical and spiritual depression, when the mood was not joy but might even be despair and pain, as indications of the absence of the power of Christ. There was also the chief danger of spiritual pride. These are the abiding dangers of all emotional religion. It marked an epoch in Christian thought when Paul elevated to the height of a Christian truth the fact of the pervasive presence of Christ at every moment in life, more especially in moments of weakness. He can even glory in his infirmities; for when he is weak, then he is strong. "He hath said,<sup>\*</sup> My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness." He speaks in words of unparalleled beauty of the power of Christ, "resting upon" him, spreading over him a shade like that

<sup>\*</sup> The tense indicates finality, a message that is at all times and everywhere applicable.

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of a tent in the burning sun or the driving storm (2 Cor. xii. 9-10). In this way, suggested by the spiritual manifestations in the Church as he found it, and reinforced by practical experience, Paul's great doctrine of the indwelling Christ arose.

It is an entirely new step in the doctrine of the person of Christ, as it is an entirely new advance in the doctrine of the Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, and all the other everyday graces of the Christian character described in Gal. v. 22ff. The gifts of the Spirit are mediated to men through the risen Jesus alone, and when we realise the scope of the Spirit's working, not only in ecstatic manifestations but in the graces of everyday life, we cannot but conclude that Paul has, in his conception of the indwelling Christ, accorded to Him a place that is due to God alone.

Paul's epistles are everywhere sprinkled with references to the "Church" or to the "churches." The word is *ecclesia*. The fundamental meaning of *ecclesia* is "assembly," and Paul lays stress on the idea of the church as an assembly of Christians for worship. He speaks of Christians "coming together in the church" (1 Cor. xi. 18), and several times he speaks of the "church" that meets in someone's house (Romans xvi. 4; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15; Philem. ii.). The "saints" in the New Testament sense<sup>1</sup> or "church members" ultimately compose the *ecclesia*. A certain inward bond, a common faith, a common experience of Christ, unites these together. This is the inner reality of the church, and enables Paul to speak of a "Church" that embraces all Christians, and is not merely a local conception. Paul is not chiefly concerned with the Church as an outward, but as an inward organisation. The appreciation

<sup>1</sup> See p. 165.

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of this in modern times would save us from much futile talk about a unity which is in the end based on outward appearance.<sup>1</sup> The primitive Church was a unity because its members worshipped the same God, and expected from Him the same kind of salvation. Hence Paul can speak of the Church of God as a unity embracing all believers and visible, now in one place, now in another. It is the Church of God in Corinth, or in Thessalonica. The conception of this inward unity is very marked when Paul says that he "persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. xv. 9). Also, Paul's belief in the impending advent of Jesus has a certain creative influence on his thought of the Church. The risen Jesus means for him the kingdom, the new world, the perfected reign of God. Of this kingdom believers are already citizens. The Church on earth already in his thought corresponds with the new order of things, a world invisible waiting to be revealed. "We are," he says to the Philippians, "a colony of heaven; and we wait for the Saviour who comes from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ." In this sense the Church is identified with the "kingdom of God," an expression rarely used by Paul. The "saints" are destined one day to "judge" the world (1 Cor. vi. 2, *cf.* Daniel vii. 22; Matt. xx. 21). Once he speaks of the Church as the "Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16), identifying it with the ancient theocratic community. The difficulty was not so present as it is to us, that members of the Church on earth may not all have a living faith in Christ, and so may not be members of the Church invisible. The conditions of the time were such that none were likely to enter the Church unless Jesus meant something real to their

<sup>1</sup> "Our differences do not concern the Church, but the doctrines of God and of salvation upon which our views of the Church rest." J. Oman, "The Church and the Divine Order," p. 3

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faith. He thinks it possible indeed that some may believe in vain (1 Cor. xv. 2), or may be found what he calls "failures," those who have not stood the test (2 Cor. xiii. 5). On the other hand Jesus is Lord of His own Church, and will either recover those that are falling away, or will give the Church authority to expel them (1 Cor. v. 11, 13). Yet Paul is never dismayed by the moral imperfection of the community. In his view, these moral imperfections are partly matters of discipline, and entirely a ground of hope, so sure is he of the moral energy that issues from sincere faith, and of the gracious condescending presence and power among them of Him whose Church it is. He knew that God had entrusted His perfect Gospel to an imperfect Church.

Both God and Christ are regarded by Paul as standing in a certain relation to this Church. It is this fact that gives the Church its unity (Eph. iv. 4-6). He calls it the Church of God (1 Cor. i. 2, etc.). It is God's husbandry, God's building (1 Cor. iii. 9). The foundation is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. vi. 11). We seem to have the beginning of a "catholic" conception in Eph. ii. 20,<sup>1</sup> but even there Jesus is "the chief corner-stone." The Church is the "temple of God" (1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16), "the reality of which the Old Testament house of God was only a symbol; as the dwelling-place of God on earth, the home which He prepared for Himself through His Spirit in humanity."<sup>2</sup> It is specially notable that the Christ who in Col. i. 19; ii. 9, is said to be the *plerōma* or "fulness" of God, is here conceived in Ephes. i. 23, as imparting that

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the passages that make the Pauline authorship of Ephesians difficult. Is Paul likely to have spoken of himself and his fellow apostles as the foundation of the Church?

<sup>2</sup> Beyschlag, "New Testament Theology," II, 232.

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"fulness" to the Church. The "fulness" in Coloss. i. 19, clearly refers to the incarnate life on earth, but cannot be regarded as excluding the life in exaltation. In Col. i. 20, Paul goes on to speak of the Christ in whom this "fulness" dwells as "reconciling all things to God." He died, who was the "fulness" of God, but Paul never thinks of the death apart from the resurrection. Salvation comes through His death, and "much more by His life" (Romans v. 10). What then is the "fulness" of which Paul speaks? It is misleading to say that it is the fulness of the Godhead, regarded as the sum of the attributes and activities of God. Certainly Paul speaks of Christ as the "fulness of the Godhead," in Col. ii. 9, but not in the sense just indicated. In other words He does not assert the complete metaphysical identity of God and Christ.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise there would be no meaning in the form of the apostolic benediction. Again we may repeat that such a conception, which can only be stated in metaphysical terms, is outside the range and purpose of Paul's thinking. His categories are religious and not metaphysical. Christ is the "fulness of God" in the sense that He represents in His own person the grace and love of God in their perfection and totality. No supplementary revelation is necessary so far as the character of God is concerned. That this is the substance and scope of the term *plerōma* is easily confirmed if we reflect that in Col. ii. 10., this "fulness" is communicable to the individual Christian. It is communicated to him as a member of the Church. This seems to be the sense in which "fulness" is predicated of the Church in Ephesians i. 23. The same idea is present when the Church is said to be the body, of which Christ is the head (Ephes. iv.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 99ff.

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15ff.). The Church is the body through whose members the risen Jesus is active in the world. "Ye are Christ's body, and as individuals, members of it" (1 Cor. xii. 27). Life, love, energy and unity are given through Him. The manifold riches of Christ are given to the Church for the mutual benefit of the individuals composing it, and for the world. Paul knows of no Christian experience that cannot be shared, and that is not dependent, for its permanence and strengthening, on fellowship.

Thus, in the thought that Christ is head of the Church, and that the Church is His body, we are again led to realise the place that Paul gives to Jesus in his religious thought. He pictures Jesus as endowed with the complete efficacy and power of God in relation to the salvation of men. Membership in the visible community is also, ideally, membership of the Church invisible, citizenship in the kingdom of God. "Along with Christ, God raised us up and seated us in heavenly places, by virtue of our being in Christ Jesus; that in ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6 f.). When Paul speaks of the Church as the body of Christ, and of Christ as head of the body, he accords Him a place in the Church which can only be regarded as divine. The Church, to Paul, is a society in which all the various natural capacities of men are consecrated as "gifts." There is infinite diversity and variety among these. Jesus Christ is their source. As such He holds a place equal with God. "There are varieties of talents, but the same spirit; varieties of service, but the same Lord; varieties of effects but the same God who effects everything in everyone" (1 Cor. xii. 4-6, Moffatt).



## VII

# JESUS

### (3) JESUS AND GOD

PAUL uses one title far oftener than any other of Jesus Christ. He calls Him *The Son of God*. It is beside the point to argue what the title may or may not have meant in the Jewish Messianic Christology. It was undoubtedly used as a Messianic title. No one would ever dream of contending that Paul invented the names by which he describes Jesus Christ. Paul is not the first to call Jesus Son of God, or Lord. The important thing to note and to discover is the new content he puts into the names he uses.

The classical passage in Paul's writing in this connection is Romans i. 3 *f.* "God's Son, who was born of the seed of David so far as physical heredity goes, and was declared by the Resurrection to be the Son of God, with freedom to impart the spirit to men, in accordance with His spirit of perfect obedience to the will of God."<sup>1</sup> To understand this passage is to hold the key to Paul's entire conception of Jesus. Let us note carefully certain general considerations that are suggested by it.

1. *That the Old Testament as a whole is prophetic of the coming of the Son of God.* Paul includes not only the Prophets, but the Law, which began even in Abraham's time; and the Psalms, which centre around David and his successors. As a glance at Paul's writings will show, he makes full and indis-

<sup>1</sup> We may thus translate "spirit of holiness," which is not equivalent to Holy Spirit.

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criminate use of the Old Testament as a source of Messianic prophecy.

2. *The Son of God is of the lineage of David.* In the primitive preaching, and in the genealogies of the gospels, stress is laid on this Davidic descent. In Mark xii. 35ff Jesus puts a question which has the effect of shewing that He Himself did not attach real importance to the Davidic genealogy. It is probable that Paul also shared this point of view. He characterises this descent as "according to the flesh." "The Christ after the flesh," as 2 Cor. v. 16 shows, had ceased to command his attention.

3. What is of much more importance for him is *the ethical character of Jesus*. Jesus is "declared to be," or "designated as Son of God with power, in virtue of the holiness of his spirit, by the Resurrection from the dead." Paul is thinking of the sinlessness of Jesus, which in the days of His flesh was a sure token of His divine Sonship. Now, that Sonship is openly declared by the fact of the Resurrection. His perfect doing of God's will is met by the response on God's part of the Resurrection. It has to be remembered that the Resurrection of Jesus, demonstrated by His appearance to Paul, swept from his thoughts the idea he had previously entertained that the Cross was the sign of God's displeasure, or "wrath," towards the Crucified. Paul came to know that not Christ's sin, but the sin of humanity was then condemned. It is along this line of thought that Paul approaches the idea of the sinlessness of Jesus. It was no doubt confirmed by the testimony of the Church; but Paul does not really express the idea as negative sinlessness, but as positive moral supremacy.

4. Jesus is declared to be *the Son of God with power*. It is not as though the Sonship of Christ

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began after the Resurrection. What He was before, He is now declared openly to be, without the limitations voluntarily imposed by the life in the flesh. The power is demonstrated by the gift of the Spirit and its operations in the Church, especially by the sense of sonship bestowed on sinful men. "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans viii. 15, 16); or more plainly, "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). It was a great epoch in the history of the Church when men and women in their prayers prefaced them with the glad and confident word, "Abba," or "Father." The Fatherhood of God had never been the universal possession of men until then. This is the signal manifestation of the power of the Spirit, and comes from the risen Christ who is Son of God, with "power" thus to reveal the love of God to all.

In this passage also certain things are implied regarding the person of the risen Jesus that are of fundamental importance.

I. THE HUMANITY OF JESUS.—The passage contains a clear recognition of the connection between the historical Jesus and the risen Christ. "Declared" implies that what He is in glory, He was essentially, within the limitations of the earthly; life namely, the Son of God. Christ's real humanity is asserted, as in the other passage where he is said to be born of a woman (Gal. iv. 4). The real humanity of Jesus in Paul's thought is here the point of importance. It cannot we think, be asserted with any confidence that Paul knew Jesus in the flesh.<sup>1</sup> Certainly

<sup>1</sup> For a spirited defence of the opposite view see J. Weiss, "Paul and Jesus," E. Tr. pp. 41 ff.

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2 Cor. v. 16 cannot be interpreted to mean that Paul is here disparaging his former knowledge of the earthly Jesus, in favour of his knowledge of Him as exalted. Doubts were indeed expressed in the church as to the validity of his apostleship on the ground that he was not originally one of the band of disciples who companied with Jesus on earth. He meets this by the claim, "Have not I seen Jesus, our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1), which, as even Weiss admits, refers to the glorified Jesus. At the same time it is entirely erroneous to assert that Paul did not care to know the facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth. We must suppose him as perfectly acquainted with the facts of that life as tradition could make him. His "gospel" was not of men, but men must have told him of the words and deeds of Jesus. He preached his gospel in full view of the Jesus tradition preserved by the Church, and widespread among its members. He lived in a society where all that was known of Jesus was current. Mark, the author of the second Gospel, was among his fellow-workers. Did Paul not care to know what he taught? Any more searching investigation of this question is not needed here, inasmuch as Paul contributes nothing new to the knowledge we have of the historical Jesus except the one saying in Acts xx. 35. It was not his business to do so.<sup>1</sup> In any case it is quite untrue to say with Weinel that "the whole human life of Jesus vanished in the spiritual Being."<sup>2</sup> It is quite true that the influence of Paulinism in the Church subsequently necessitated the supplementing and further development of the doctrine

<sup>1</sup> The reader may be referred, in this connection to the article "Paul and Jesus," by C. A. Anderson Scott in "Cambridge Biblical Essays," or to P. Feine, "Neutestamentliche Theologie," pp. 200ff. (cf his "Jesus Christus und Paulus," pp. 56 ff.)

<sup>2</sup> "St. Paul, the Man and his Work," p. 316.

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of the exalted Christ by connecting it more closely with the earthly life. Such a presentation we have in the Fourth Gospel. The real humanity of Jesus, however, is an extremely important element in Paul's thought of His person. The original and creative element in Paul's thought is his doctrine of the Incarnation. From Romans i. 3 *f.*, we see clearly that, during the earthly life, Jesus was Son of God.

In what sense? The answer is found in Phil. ii. 7. "He was made in the likeness of men. Being found in human form, He humbled Himself, and became obedient even so far as to die—to die on the Cross." The human life of Jesus is a deliberate voluntary act on His part. The only phrase that seems to indicate any deflection from ordinary humanity is the phrase, "in the likeness of men." We may compare the phrase in Romans viii. 3, "in the likeness of the flesh of sin." Paul must have had a reason for not saying directly, "He was made a man," or "He sent His Son in the flesh of sin." What influences Paul's language is his conviction of the sinlessness or moral supremacy of Jesus. In this regard He is different from other men. At the same time, both in Paul and in the New Testament generally, sin is inextricably associated with, but is never regarded as of the essence of "flesh," or human nature. It is part of *fallen* human nature.

Moreover, it is to be noted that Paul does not confine himself to the negative concept of the "sinlessness" of Jesus, as in 2 Cor. v. 21. He usually states the fact positively, in terms of holiness, as in Romans i. 4, and of moral perfection, as in Romans v. 18. "So then as one transgression resulted in condemnation for all men, so also one righteous act resulted in justification to life for all

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men" (*cf.* viii. 3, and Phil. ii. 8, which will presently fall to be considered). Moreover, the belief in the sinlessness of Jesus is no dogmatic utterance of Paul's on the ground of his single experience. In this he is at one with the witness of the Apostolic Church.<sup>1</sup>

Paul's emphasis, however, in Romans i. 36 is not so much on the sinlessness of Jesus, as on His identification with us in real humanity. It is much more necessary to convince the men to whom he spoke of the second. The first they would readily take for granted. Accordingly we find him laying stress on this second aspect in Phil. ii. 5-10. The passage implies that the human life of Jesus was a condition voluntarily assumed by Him. So complete was the assumption that He even submitted to death. The process of entering our human life Paul describes by the strange term "emptied himself." He exchanged the "form" of divine existence, for the form<sup>2</sup> of human existence, which in relation to God demanded the obedience of a servant. The Incarnation was an act of condescension on the part of Jesus.

2. PRE-EXISTENCE. Even in Romans i. 3, we are brought face to face with the assumption that the Son of God existed prior to the Incarnation. The

<sup>1</sup> Acts iii. 14, iv. 27, vii. 52; 1 Peter ii. 22; Heb. iv. 15, vii. 26, ix. 14; 1 John iii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek word is *morphē*. Originally it was a Greek philosophical term, but it is in a loose popular sense that Paul uses it. It is an extremely difficult word to translate. The Greek philosophical use of the term does not help us much. Doubtless the word in later Greek had acquired a popular meaning. In the LXX. it denotes "the form, appearance, look, or likeness of someone, that by which those beholding him would judge him" (Kennedy, "Expositor's Greek Testament," III., *in loc.*). Eliphaz says of "the spirit" or "breath" that he felt and did not see, "I could not see the form (*morphē*) thereof" (Job iv. 16). *cf.* Milton, "Paradise Lost," ii., 268, "or substance might be called that shadow seemed." All that can be said is that the pre-existent Christ of Paul is no "shadow."



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Son of God is the content of God's message in the Old Testament. The same doctrine is implied in 2 Cor. viii. 9. Jesus is One who, "being rich, for our sakes became poor." Pre-existence is stated explicitly in Phil. ii. 5. Also, Jesus is prior to all creation (Col. i. 15, see pp. 118f). There cannot be the slightest doubt that, in Jewish thought, the Messiah was regarded as existing in heaven, prior to His manifestation on earth. Enoch xlviii. speaks of the Messiah as existing "before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made." It is also asserted that "He has been chosen and hidden before the (Lord of Spirits) before the creation of the world, and for evermore." So far as we can see, Paul is not conscious of introducing a doctrinal novelty when he speaks of the pre-existence of the Christ. He refers to the fact always in quite an incidental manner. It may also fairly be claimed that the conception of pre-existence is part of our Lord's own consciousness (John viii. 56, xvii. 4, 5, 24). It is, however, entirely beside the point to say, "Here is another instance where Paul deliberately fills out his conception of Jesus with the current Messianic ideas." Even if he did, it would only be an indication of the place that he accorded to Him. The real fact is that the current conception of a pre-existent Messiah falls far short of Paul's conception of Jesus' pre-existence. What Paul has actually done is to expand the Messianic pre-existence into an idea, which is peculiarly his own contribution to the Christian consciousness. He nowhere uses the title "Son of Man" of Jesus, which is the characteristic title of the pre-existent Messiah in the Book of Enoch, and later apocalyptic writings. The idea of the "Heavenly Man" in Paul, as we shall see later, cannot be regarded as an

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equivalent.<sup>1</sup> Paul transforms the figure of the pre-existent Messiah or Son of Man into a self-conscious divine Personality, whom he identifies with the risen Jesus who appeared to him, and with the historical Jesus. Elsewhere, he even makes use of a clumsy Rabbinical conception, that the rock from which Moses drew the water in the wilderness was really Messiah, who accompanied the Chosen People in all their journeying (1 Cor. x. 4). He applies it to illustrate the fact from ancient history that even then, as now, sacramental communion with the living Christ was in itself no magical safeguard against sin, and its punishment, death. And just as he reads back the doctrine of the Christian sacraments into Jewish history, so he projects back on the pre-existent figure of Messiah in the Philippians passage, a conception of Jesus, and of the Incarnation, which was for him the fruit of his Christian experience. It is hard to see what other origin the conception could have had. After all, the Son of Man in Enoch is somewhat of a lay-figure, and is so lacking in definite feature that it can be identified in Daniel with the Chosen Nation. This is in accordance with the position accorded to Messiah in Jewish thought. Sometimes he is entirely absent; nowhere is he really a divine Person with independent powers of action. Certainly his coming to earth is very different from the action of a Being like the Son of God in Paul's thought, who of His own free-will stoops to share our human life and its doom of death, the wages of sin. He is one who knew no sin. It is true that in the Psalms of Solomon, the Messiah, the Son of David, is said to be "pure from sin;"<sup>2</sup> but it cannot seriously be contended that the notion of sin in the Psalms of Solomon reaches anything

<sup>1</sup> pp. 97 f.

<sup>2</sup> Pss. Sol. xvii. 41.

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like the depth and intensity of Paul's idea of Jesus' "spirit of holiness." No one would seek to deny that Paul is influenced by these notions of a "Christ after the flesh," but they are not the creative element in his thought. The creative element is the spiritual influence of Jesus, and the historical fact of His death on the Cross. In Paul's view, such a sacrifice and humiliation could only be voluntary.

Sometimes the attempt is made to interpret Jewish ideas of the pre-existent Messiah as meaning only an ideal pre-existence, in the thought of God. It is safe to say that to the unmetaphysical Jew, such a notion would have been impossible.<sup>1</sup> If the Jew believed, as he undoubtedly did—at least in later times—that Messiah pre-existed in heaven with God, we may be perfectly sure that he regarded him as existing beforehand in the same form as he appears on earth.<sup>2</sup> His manifestation on earth is simply a transition from concealment to publicity. There can be no question of an *assumptio naturae novae* in the human form of existence.<sup>3</sup> It is precisely this idea of an "assumption of a new nature," although not in the Greek sense, that is characteristic of Paul's thought. The conception is neither Jewish nor Greek, but purely Christian. This is the essence of his doctrine of the Incarnation. Jesus as Son of God, stooped from the "nature" of God to the "nature" of man. He voluntarily laid aside His divine condition, and entered into ours. He came in "likeness of sinful flesh." For Paul, the "flesh" is tremulous with the sense of that weakness and suffering, which Jesus shared.

<sup>1</sup> cf. Harnack, "History of Dogma," I., pp. 318 ff.

<sup>2</sup> cf. R. H. Strachan, "The Idea of Pre-existence in the Fourth Gospel," *American Journal of Theology*, January, 1914.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

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It is "sinful" because human nature, in its weakness, has been exposed to, and has succumbed to sin. Sin is conceived of as a hostile and malignant power that has set up its citadel in the flesh. The Incarnation of Jesus meant its destruction. It was an act of condescending love in which God and Christ were at one. "God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans viii. 3). In Dr. Denney's words, "God had pronounced the doom of sin, and brought its claims and its authority over man to an end."<sup>1</sup> Sin has no more dominion over men. In order to accomplish this great result, the pre-existent Son of God did not "masquerade" in the flesh.<sup>2</sup> He really met sin in the innermost recesses of human experience, even death itself, and overcame it. It was a moral and spiritual necessity of Paul's doctrine of the Incarnation that Jesus should be truly man.

On the other hand, those who would claim a real pre-existence for the Son of God cannot be said to receive much assistance from the theory that Paul regarded Jesus as the "Heavenly Man," pre-existing in heaven as a human personality. To the present writer, the doctrine of the "Heavenly Man" seems to have nothing whatever to do with pre-existence. It is found in 1 Cor. xv. 45 ff. Apart from the fact that if Paul so conceived the pre-existent Christ as a human personality, the Incarnation would be meaningless, and robbed of that condescension which is inextricably bound up with it, there are surely clear indications that the idea of the Heavenly Man pre-supposes the Incarnation,

<sup>1</sup> "Expositor's Greek Testament," Romans *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> The expressions "guise of sinful flesh," and "in human guise," adopted by Moffatt in his translation of Rom. viii. 3, and Phil. ii., 8, fall below the extraordinary standard of successful rendering elsewhere.

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and does not precede it. It is because Christ was incarnate that He is the Heavenly<sup>1</sup> Man, the ideal Representative of a redeemed humanity. The argument centres around the question of the resurrection body. "There is a spiritual body," says Paul, "because the exalted Jesus has a spiritual body. He, too, is no disembodied Spirit. I have seen Him. Just as Adam is the representative of humanity in its natural and fallen state, and we share in Adam's nature, so shall we share in the nature of the Heavenly Man. The Incarnation is itself a guarantee of personal human immortality. The risen Jesus is the first-born among many brethren." Philo evolves a theory of an "earthly" and a "heavenly," or "ideal," man from the two narratives of creation in Genesis i., ii. The "ideal" man is made "after the image of God;" the "actual" man is made "of the dust of the earth." Did Paul obtain the idea from him? A fatal objection is that Philo's first man is Paul's second. Both Adams, moreover, in Paul's thought, are concrete, and in 1 Cor. xi. 7, Genesis i. 26 is referred to the ideal first man. These objections hardly leave room even for a polemic reference to Philo. The whole conception of the Pauline Heavenly Man as a pre-existing "Urmensch," inaugurated by Baur, and accepted by Pfeiderer, is a good instance of the type of criticism that denies creative originality and intellectual daring to the New Testament writers, and seeks to explain all their thoughts by reference to the libraries of their time.

Paul, then, conceives Jesus as pre-existent, living a life divine in quality; not merely like God, but participating in His nature—"in the form of

<sup>1</sup> Thought is apt to be misled by the expression "man from heaven," which simply records the transformation of the earthly body of Christ into the heavenly body.

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God," The pre-existent Christ was for Paul as real as God. It cannot be too much emphasised, however unsatisfactory it may seem to the modern metaphysical mind, that Paul nowhere tries to think out the metaphysical relationship of Christ to God, either as pre-existent, or as incarnate. Elsewhere he calls Him the Image of God (Col. i. 15). He shares in that glory (*doxa*), which is the manifestation of the divine nature. Paul's *motif* throughout the Philippian passage is ethical and not speculative, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus;" similarly in 2 Cor. viii. 9, where the idea occurs in the midst of an exhortation to Christian liberality. The place of conviction that this doctrine of the pre-existent Christ, who in love condescended to become man, occupied in Paul's thought, is evidenced by the way in which he can appeal to it as the foundation of Christian ethics.

Two things need to be borne in mind. The first is that this doctrine of the condescension, the becoming *poor*, of the pre-existent Christ, is not to be opened up by any mere process of speculative thought. We must first feel what Paul felt, the inspiration of the motive that controls it. It is a doctrine that has a profound bearing on human conduct. If we believe that the self-humiliation and self-sacrifice of Christ is true, it is rather a disturbing and disconcerting judgment that we shall have to pass on the sacrifice and self-abnegation that we are willing to undergo in our own life as Christians. Not only intellectual perplexity but a radical selfishness in our nature may make us unwilling to believe in the Incarnation. The consequent alteration in moral values is very disquieting, and the ennoblement of human life by the Incarnation makes a great moral demand. The second point to be remembered is this. It may be



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put in the form of a question. What conceivably can be the origin in Paul's mind of such a fact, the fact of the Incarnation, which he puts forward as the chief source of all Christian morality? Surely no one will dare to say that he arrived at it by pure speculation, or by simply taking over into his thought an idea that was current, say in the mystery-religions. In thus speaking of the condescension and unselfishness of Christ, Paul is presenting these as illustrated in certain stages or moments in the life of the Son of God—Pre-existence, Incarnation, Exaltation. The last two are facts of history, that are capable either of being experienced, or inferred from what men had experienced of Jesus. The first is for Paul also a fact of history as 1 Cor. x. 4 shows. Such a view of the Incarnation is a necessary deduction from what he himself and the Christian Church conceived Jesus to be, the Son of God. It is probable that Paul never speculated much on Christ's pre-existent state. To him it was an obvious truth.

A certain solemnity attaches to all the passages where Paul speaks of Jesus as "Son" or "Son of God" (Romans i. 3, 4, 9; v. 10; viii. 3, 29, 32; 1 Cor. i. 9, etc.). The title cannot be said to shed any light on the actual and essential relationship between Christ and God. Yet it describes a relationship, and that too a unique one. It is in line with the unique sense of filial relationship apparent in the Jesus of the Gospels. The title has its origin in Messianic thought, as Psalm ii. shows, and Paul clearly recognises (Acts xiii. 33). It is quite true that the purely Semitic use of the term "son" may simply imply "belonging to," e.g., "sons of the Pharisees" (Mark xii. 27); "sons of the kingdom" (Matt. viii. 12); "sons of this

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world" (Luke xvi. 8). So the Messiah is called "son of God" as the chosen ruler of the future kingdom. The Greek use of the term "son of God," on the other hand, implied that the son had proceeded in some mysterious fashion from the inmost being of the Father. In Paul's usage, as applied to Jesus, he is again neither Jewish nor Greek, but Christian. No minute speculation as to the essence of the relationship is demanded. Love is the bond that unites Jesus and God. He is the Son of His love. Love is also the bond that brings Him into communion with men. The sense is clearly present in the words of Romans viii. 32, "He that spared not His own Son."

By what avenue of approach does Paul reach the conception? Surely, again, by the avenue of experience. He himself, as every Christian, is translated out of a relationship of fear towards God, into one of love; of uncertainty into one of assurance. "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). He who mediates this relationship to men, must Himself *par excellence* be "Son." Strictly speaking the sonship of men is a sonship by adoption (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 5). It is an act of grace, unhindered by the absence of the moral qualities that are pleasing to God. In the case of Jesus we have the absolute and eternal relationship. God is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" in the often repeated Pauline phrase. He is the Son in whom God is well-pleased. Jesus represents and conveys to men this eternal relationship. If Jesus no longer lives, the relationship for men is either an illusion or an impossibility. As such He is lifted high above the boundaries of humanity. The Divine Nature was, and is, His home. Now He is declared by the Resurrection

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to be the Son of God "with power." The Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, mean that it is open to Him to confer on men the adoption of sons. While Jesus was pre-existent, the gift was impossible, inasmuch as He then lacked the essential element of the Incarnation, in virtue of which He became one with the whole human race. While He lived within the limits of the earthly life, such a gift was at least not possible for every man, perhaps not fully possible for any, inasmuch as Jesus had not yet conquered death. Now, however, He has become the Son of God "with power." Now He has become the Heavenly Man, Head and Source and Representative of a new order of humanity. It is striking to note how the human name "Jesus" stands out in the midst of the ascription of absolute power and lordship to Him in Philippians ii. 9-11. It is a token that the fearful and guilty heart of Paul has found one spot of rest and peace in the haunted universe. The gift of "sonship" or "love" streams in on the hearts of all men from Him who is at once the Son of His love, and Representative Man. "God's love pours into our hearts like a flood through the Holy Spirit which has been given us" (Romans v. 5).

## VIII

# JESUS

### (4) JESUS AND THE UNIVERSE

GENERALLY speaking Christ's relation to the Universe is defined in the comprehensive title "Lord." When Paul calls Jesus "Lord," he means that He is on the throne of the Universe, which includes the lordship over the individual lives of men. Indeed He could only be the Lord of our lives completely by being the Lord of the Universe. We have already seen what Paul's universe was like.<sup>1</sup> Paul indeed calls Him the Divine Agent in creation at the beginning of all things. Here again we have one of those conceptions most puzzling to the modern mind. "Through Him (Christ) all things were created both in heaven and on earth, both the seen and the unseen, thrones, angelic lords, celestial powers and rulers; all things have been created through Him and for Him; He is prior to all and all coheres in Him" (Col. i. 16-17). Paul, with his passionate Jewish monotheism, does not mean to dethrone God, or to rob Him of His creative power. He means that God's power was exercised through Christ. He cannot conceive of God even at the creation, as acting without Christ. Jesus was the Mediator in creation, as He is in salvation. We must remember that Paul has an apologetic purpose in writing as he does to the Colossians. To us he

<sup>1</sup> pp. 58ff; cf Bacon, "Story of St. Paul," pp. 320ff.

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seems to be displacing God, and removing Him to an infinite distance from His creation. His purpose is really the contrary. In the minds of those to whom he wrote, it was a customary thought that God was too high and holy to interfere directly in the work of creation, much more in the work of redeeming individual men and women. To most men in those days, God was a transcendent and mysterious Being, whose Personality was not clearly defined, who worked by means of intermediaries. These are the angelic beings whom the Colossian church is worshipping.<sup>1</sup> Paul's Christian faith swept them aside, and substituted Christ's rule and authority for theirs. Thereby, he was really bringing God infinitely nearer to the world and to the lives of men.

What is this universe like of which Jesus is now Lord? Enough has been already said of it to show that it had become a terrifying place in which to live. Paul's cosmology is based on his Pharisaic inheritance of the belief in angels and spirits. The Hebrew notion was that the earth was a flat disc of some depth, floating on the "waters under the earth." Within the earth itself, and underneath, lay Sheol (Hades, Hell), the abode of the dead. The firmament was like an inverted bowl over the earth. Above it, at least in late Judaism, stretched tiers of heavens, the number of which was somewhat indeterminate, but never more than seven. Paul apparently believed in three, arranged as a series of ascending spheres, the third of which was Paradise (2 Cor. xii. 2-4). After the Resurrection, Christ ascends above all heavens (Ephes. iv. 10). This was the ordinary Jewish conception, no doubt influenced by the intrusion of Babylonian or

<sup>1</sup> See Bacon, *op. cit.* pp. 324 ff.

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Persian elements. Of far more importance is the doctrine of angels and spirits. We have seen that all forces, both moral and physical, were conceived in an animistic sense. Where we would speak of natural or moral law, Paul would speak of the direct operation of angelic or demonic beings, good or bad. These are the "principalities and powers," "the rulers of this world," "the things in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth" (Phil. ii. 10). When Paul speaks of God as "in heaven" (Romans i. 18), or of "the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col. iii. 1), he evidently means the highest heaven, whence Christ will return at His "Appearing" (1 Thess. i. 10). Here also it is that believers have their "citizenship" (Phil. iii. 20), and where their life is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). In other passages the apostle, when he speaks of "heavenly things" is thinking of the lowest sphere, as for instance when he speaks of "the air." This is the visible heaven. Here the evil spirits dwell, and here at His Advent Christ will finally vanquish them all (1 Cor. xv. 24), and believers who are alive will be caught up to meet Him (1 Thess. iv. 17). The life of men on earth is closely connected with the action of angels and spirits. His own life of suffering and hardship is a spectacle to angels and to men (1 Cor. iv. 9). It is remarkable how seldom Paul speaks of Satan, the chief of the hierarchy of evil spirits. Once he calls him "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4; *cf.* 1 Cor. v. 5, vii. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 11, xi. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 18). The Anti-Christ of 2 Thess. ii. 1-12, is the Devil in human form. He is called Beliar in 2 Cor. vi. 15, the name used in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs of the spirit of evil, the great antagonist to the rule of God. Elsewhere he speaks of the "rulers of this world"



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by whom he clearly means the demonic powers to which this "age" or "world" is given over (1 Cor. ii. 8). The whole universe of living beings, including angelic and demonic powers, is sometimes described by him in the word *kosmos*, (translated "world.") 1 Cor. iv. 9 reads "a spectacle to the world (*kosmos*), both to angels and to men." Sin is conceived of sometimes as a kind of evil impulse seated in the flesh, and sometimes as quasi-personal, a kind of evil power in itself; so also death, in which the demonic powers are most active. "Let not sin have dominion over you." "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." The thought in many parts of Romans will be considerably simplified if instead of such expressions as "the law of sin," "the law of death," we translate "law" by "authority" or "power."

Unless we carry with us a clear conception of this animistic view of the Universe which dominated the mind of Paul, we shall be unable to understand the full significance of the title "Lord" which he applies to the risen Jesus. In the primitive preaching, e.g., Acts ii. 36, Jesus is spoken of as both "Lord and Christ," which evidently implies His victory over all His spiritual enemies. It was reserved, however, for the more penetrating and comprehensive imagination of Paul, expanding the contents of the earlier faith, to see in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus a kind of Homeric struggle between Jesus and the unseen powers of evil. Already, as we have seen, in the apocalyptic writings, the struggles of the nation are reflected in the heavenly sphere in a mighty contest between God and the angelic powers, who were unfaithful to the charge committed to them. It is eloquent of the place that Paul gives to Christ in his faith, and of his independence of contemporary

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ideas of the Messiah—where the loftiest title used of Him is Judge—that he gives to Him in the Universe the place of God. It is Christ who gains the victory over the demonic powers. This is the spiritual meaning of the Cross and Resurrection. We have already seen that he conceives the crucifixion as the work of these powers. He also says that by His death and resurrection, Jesus won a decisive victory over them; the herald of the complete victory yet to be accomplished, in which all the redeemed would be included, and salvation would be complete. "Having despoiled of their dominion the principalities and powers, He exposed them to all the world for what they are, and triumphed over them in the Cross" (Col. ii. 15).

And there is yet a fuller and more final victory to be accomplished, when their sway in the lives and hearts of men shall be no more, and the kingdom is complete. "Then cometh the end, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after having brought to nought every other form of dominion, all other authorities and powers. For He must reign until He puts every enemy under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is Death; for everything God hath put under His feet. When it is said that everything is put under His feet, it is plain that God is excluded who put everything under Him. When everything is put under Him, then the Son Himself shall be subject<sup>1</sup> to Him that put everything under Christ, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24-28).

In Colossians, Paul is no doubt opposing influences of a Hellenistic nature. There was that, however, in Jewish apocalyptic, especially the Diaspora form of it, which easily blended with Hellenistic ideas. The Mosaic law was really a constituent

<sup>1</sup>For the idea of Christ's subjection, see. pp. 113f.

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part of the Universe in Paul's view as a Pharisee. According to the Rabbinic view, it was "given by angels." Christ's authority has abrogated it; and Paul is putting the idea in more dramatic form when he says that Christ "despoiled" the agents in its transmission, the angelic powers. In a sense, with the victory over sin whose "strength is the law," the reign of law has come to an end. Here again we may note that Paul's conversion experience contained the germ of the complete doctrine of the Lordship of Christ over the Universe. He that can conquer sin in a human heart, make a bad man good, is Lord of all. Moral slavery of every kind, whether it emerges as fear or as transgression, is banished by the Lordship of Jesus. Missionaries, who know what the animistic religion of fear means, ever find in Paul their chiefest ally; and, probably more than any other class of Christian worker or preacher, have contributed to the successful exegesis of Paul's conception of the demon world.<sup>1</sup> A Chinese convert was observed to cross without a tremor a narrow plank bridge leading over a stream. Formerly, in pre-Christian days, he was afraid to do so, lest the spirit of the stream should seize him. "Yes," he said, in answer to a question, "the demon is there still; but Christ is stronger, and I have no fear." "Christ is stronger, and I have no fear;" what is that but a feebler echo of Paul's pæan of praise and triumph in Romans viii. 31 ff? "If God be for us, who can be against us? who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "Nay, in all these things we are more-than-conquerors," he says, coining a word in his eagerness to express an emotion and a confidence, hitherto unknown among men.

Moreover, in Paul's case also, the demons are

<sup>1</sup> cf. Datta, "The Desire of India," pp. 95 ff.

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"there still." "We wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this present world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the air around us"<sup>1</sup> (Ephes. vi. 12). These words also express what he means by "working out to the final end our own salvation." Only in Acts xiii. 23, Phil. iii. 20 does Paul apply the title "Saviour" to Jesus, but salvation is the direct result of the Lordship of Christ. We contend with powers of evil—sin, sorrow, sickness, and death—over which He is sovereign. He has placed His victory over them in our hands. Through faith comes the energy to overcome.<sup>2</sup> None of these things can separate us from the safe security of His redeeming love, that greatest gift without repentance and the pledge of His power. Paul's Christian faith does not involve that he has ceased to believe in the existence of these powers, any more than he could cease to believe in the reality of the fact of death, where for him the whole power of evil and doom was once concentrated. To die is now to be "with Christ, which is far better;" and to live is to "live unto the Lord," and under the shadow of His dominion of love. However Paul the Christian still conceived these demonic powers, his conception does not affect the permanence of His gospel.<sup>3</sup>

Everyone has his own demonic world, which we semi-personify; and, personification or none, we all know its power. Passions that sometimes seem to speak

<sup>1</sup> By the concluding phrase an attempt is made to render intelligible "in the heavenly places," denoting the lowest heavenly sphere, that which is visible to us.

<sup>2</sup> cf. 1 John v. 4, "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith."

<sup>3</sup> "It does not hurt a man to believe that there are as many devils around him as tiles on the house-tops, so long as his faith in God makes him go his way and bid defiance to them."—Bacon, *op. cit.* p. 324

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and act for us ; fashion that moulds, conventional morality that enslaves us ; the fear of bodily discomfort or sacrifice that drives us into selfish isolation ; religious formality and hypocrisy that deceive us ; a *Zeit-geist* to which we are slaves—all these still need the gospel of salvation that Paul preached. Paul only expressed, in the language of his time, facts of human experience that are as permanent as humanity itself. Our universe has vaster spaces than Paul's, and tempts us to think that it no longer provides the easy scientific apparatus for a descent of the Son of God from heaven, or for a kingdom of evil spirits, or for a Titanic struggle in the unseen. Our planet has become so very small in the presence of the illimitable spaces, and a single human life is so negligible in the midst of innumerable millions of our fellows, that to-day many incline to turn Paul's songs of praise into sobs of despair, or even into a chilling silence, worse than despair. May we not ask ourselves whether Paul's gospel *really* depends for its validity on the size of the world in which, and to which it was preached? Do men, even, value things by their size on any sane or righteous estimate? Is a jewel left to be trampled under foot because it is small? Space, and time, and sense are our spiritual enemies. Are God's valuations of men and things calculated on another plane than ours? I imagine that Paul's smaller universe was just as lonely and terrifying a place for him as our larger one is for us. Juliana of Norwich, a mystic of the fourteenth century, has given a most touching and beautiful expression of faith in the divine Lordship of the Universe, worthy to be set alongside that of Paul:

“ Well I wot that heaven and earth, and all that is made is great and large, fair and good ; but the

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cause why it shewed so little to my sight was for that I saw it in the presence of Him who is the Maker of all things; for to a soul that seeth the Maker of all, all that is made seemeth full little." "In this little thing," she continues, "I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loveth it, the third, that God keepeth it. But what is to me, verily, the Maker, the Keeper, and the Lover—I cannot tell; for till I am substantially oned to Him I may never have full rest nor very bliss; that is to say, till I be so fastened to Him, that there is right nought that is made betwixt my God and me."<sup>1</sup>

These words are by no means an inadequate expression of the permanent Christian element in Paul's thought. Paul's conception is equally true of human experience at all times, when the hostile powers of evil are not seen in one large heroic view, but are concentrated in one evil happening in the life of a single individual. Paul's permanent weakness of body was a "messenger from Satan." Still, there are stricken, and weary, and despairing souls to whom the Lord comes as to Paul, and says, "My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in thy weakness."<sup>2</sup> Paul's experience of the powers of evil is precisely ours. It does not matter how he conceives their existence. "Although there are so-called gods in heaven or on earth—and there are plenty of them, gods and lords—for us there is one God and Father, from whom are all things, and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things came into being, and we ourselves exist" (1 Cor. viii. 5).

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by C. F. E. Spurgeon, "Mysticism," pp. 122f.

<sup>2</sup> cf. a very suggestive sermon by J. M. E. Ross, "The Christian Standpoint," pp. 139ff.



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Paul's thought is not so far removed from our own as we think. The moral issue would be a great deal clearer for us, if we thought less in terms of "the problem of evil." Nine-tenths of the "problem" of evil in the world is due to the direct action of men as personal beings. Their sinister power is shattered by the conviction that Jesus is exalted as Head over all, and that they can be brought into subjection to Him. "*Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi?*"

For Paul the whole universe is conceived as involved, and as having its final aim, in the Kingdom of God, which is synonymous with the perfected Lordship or Rule of Jesus. We may recur for a moment to the thought of Phil. ii. 5ff. There it is said that the pre-existent Jesus "being in the form of God (*i.e.*, divine by nature), counted it not a thing to be grasped at, to be equal with God" (v. 6). Everything depends in our understanding of this verse on the question whether "to be equal with God" is the same idea as "being in the form of God." In other words whether Paul's conception is (1) that Jesus unselfishly relinquished whatever is meant by "being equal with God" or "being in the form of God," in order that the Incarnation might be possible; or (2) that equality with God was within His grasp, and is something more than is involved in "being in the form of God." The latter is the true interpretation. Instead of selfishly seizing this equality which was His right, he relinquished it. He made Himself "of no reputation." This self-humiliation is met by a corresponding act of divine generosity and recognition on the part of God. "Wherefore God did more than raise Him up. He conferred on Him the name above all names, so that before the name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven, on earth, and

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under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Jesus has thus reached an equality with God so far as men and their relation to the Universe (described as things in heaven, earth, under the earth) are concerned. It can only mean, not that essentially He is other than He was before, but that His work on earth has brought Him into a relationship with men which He did not before possess. This seems the real interpretation of the passage. As a self-conscious independent divine Being, He might have chosen other methods, not involving self-sacrifice, whereby to assert His supremacy. Instead, He stooped to conquer, and Paul asserts that God recognised the deed, and in so doing proclaimed that the condescending love of the Incarnation is a true interpretation of the Divine Love, indeed the only possible one, if men are to be made cognisant of it. We may be unable to feel at home with the forms of Paul's thought. At least we can see clearly that he could not possibly fill the content of the title "Lord," fuller with the sense of the divine supremacy of Jesus than he does.

At this point we may call attention to what appears as a very disconcerting fact, that while Paul regards Jesus as "equal with God" as an object of men's worship, love, and trust, he yet affirms distinctly His actual subordination to God the Father. "A candid exegesis will acknowledge that now and then the matter is too clear for dispute; Christ is given a place inferior to God, and His work as Mediator and Reconciler is eventually traced to the Father as originative cause."<sup>1</sup> We may note such expressions as "God sent forth His Son" (Gal. iv. 4). It is God who reconciles men "in Christ," "commends" His own love to us in Christ's death.

<sup>1</sup> H. R. Mackintosh, "Person of Christ," p. 71.

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The whole career of Christ ultimately redounds "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 11). We may note also 1 Cor. xi. 3, "The head of Christ is God." "Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 23). The passage, however, where the clearest assertion is made is 1 Cor. xv. 28. "Then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things to (Christ), that God may be all in all." Various explanations are given in order to conserve Paul's theological consistency.<sup>1</sup> None are really of any value or cogency. The only clue that may be given to account for the disturbance of Paul's logic in this connection, is of a kind similar to that applied in the case of Romans ix. 11. As there, Paul's patriotism exercises a disturbing force, so here we have the influence of his passionate Jewish monotheism. It represents an individual element in his thinking the motive of which is not speculative, but religious. In 1 Cor. xv. 24ff., he lays hold of a Jewish doctrine that an *interim* Messianic kingdom will be inaugurated upon earth when Messiah comes. It is out of this doctrine that the Christian doctrine of a millenium springs. Paul does not conceive the temporary Messianic kingdom as a kingdom on earth; he adapts the doctrine to his own point of view of a spiritual kingdom in a spiritual sphere. He thinks of a day when the supremacy of Jesus as Lord, delegated to Him, over all that concerns the salvation of men, shall be surrendered to the Father again. We must also note that it is by no means implied, as in certain forms of the Jewish doctrine of an *interim*-kingdom, that the Christ ceases to have any significance, or function, or even existence; or is degraded to a position inferior to that which He formerly occupied. His drift is that all that Christ as Lord now means for us

<sup>1</sup> These are clearly stated by Mackintosh, *op. cit.* pp. 73ff.

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men and our salvation, God will mean, who will be "all in all."

Somerville in his richly suggestive book, "St. Paul's Conception of Christ" (p. 136, note), quotes a daring remark of Mr. Gladstone's in his Proem to Genesis, on this passage. "It may be we shall find that Christianity itself is in some sort a scaffolding, and that the final building is a pure and perfect theism; when the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, that God may be all in all." We must also remember that Paul himself is very forward to admit that in the transfigured life knowledge will be "done away" or "superseded:"

"For we know only bit by bit, and we only prophesy bit by bit; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will be superseded. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I argued like a child; now that I am a man, I am done with childish ways. At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror, but then it will be face to face; at present I am learning bit by bit, but then I will understand, as all along I have myself been understood" (1 Cor. xiii. 9-12, Moffatt).

The state of "resurrection from the dead," also, will contain surprises of knowledge, as well as of character. "Not that I have already obtained or am already mature" (Phil. iii. 12). He means maturity of thought, as well as of character. "As many as are mature, let us think in this way. If in any matter of truth or conduct ye think otherwise, even in those cases shall God reveal to you the truth. Only one thing! So far as our knowledge serves us, let us keep the path." (*ib.* 15, 16.)

The very happy translation in v. 16, attributed to Weizsäcker, and adopted above, "let us keep the path," embodies a truth for every age in its speculation on the Person of Jesus. The path

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in question is the path by which Paul conceives Him as entering our human world, and it is also the path by which He left it, to resume His glory. It is "the more excellent way" of love. For Paul it was not a path that in its making disturbed the truths which the science of his day had revealed about the universe. It need not do so to-day. The path is ethical and not speculative. Jesus came, not to preach the love of God, "but to be for us the love that God for ever is."<sup>1</sup> As we follow, under the guidance of the New Testament, the path by which Jesus left our world, we find that it is one with the path He trod while in it, as it is one with the path by which He entered it. Paul can speak of the name that is above every name, as the "Name of *Jesus*." His heavenly lordship, and His heavenly ministry are exercised in the same love—now a love "in power"—whose saving might men experienced while He was on earth. Jesus has brought us into the very presence of God—in itself a divine act. "He has brought God and man into a new relation; and he is the personal concern of every one of us." These words of Dr. Glover's<sup>2</sup> are no substitute for a metaphysic of the Person of Jesus, if such be desired. They are, however, a clear definition of the path we must keep in our reasoning, from which Paul certainly never swerved.

It is no doubt true to say that Paul's categories of thought belong to another age than our own. It was, however, the "sonship" with God conferred on men by Jesus, that he regarded as the chief and permanent fact about Him. Shall we regard it as an impossible thought that He shall

<sup>1</sup> P. T. Forsyth, "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> See T. R. Glover, "Conflict of Religions within the Roman Empire," p. 157.

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one day hand over the kingdom to the Father? Are we right in cultivating so much to-day faith in Christ, to the neglect of faith in God? On the other hand, has not our faith in God suffered in depth and vision, and ultimately in strength, by the conception of the risen Jesus as merely an immortal Man of Nazareth, who is indeed risen, but whose jurisdiction and care extend only to that historical class of things and activities which occupied Him in the days of His flesh? Can we say with Paul that "all things work together for good to them that love God," or that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"? Can we speak of "where Christ is, at the right hand of God," in other words, on the throne of the Universe? Paul said those things in virtue of his faith in God, as revealed in Jesus. He met God in Jesus. God is the God and Father of Jesus. Does he really mean anything else, when he speaks of Christ as handing over the kingdom to the Father, than this, that in the final sum of all things, when space, time and sense are no more, what he knows now as faith in Christ will have become without disappointment, but with a sense of full fruition, perfect faith in God? It is by following the path suggested in Paul's doctrine of the subordination of Christ to God—equally apparent in the Johannine writings and in Hebrews—that many difficulties about the Incarnation will cease to exist. Our habit is to construct imposing conceptions of God as Creator, Infinite, Absolute, Almighty, Unchangeable, Omnipresent, Omniscient; and then to attempt to find God in Christ. Paul approaches God from the standpoint of Jesus Christ, and his experience of Him. Christ came to reveal Him to men. Paul has taught us to think of God in terms of the qualities and attributes of Christ, not to think of Christ in terms



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of the supposed qualities and attributes of God. It is the method of Jesus of Nazareth. To believe that God has taken knowledge of human suffering and sin in the cross of Jesus, and that He has redeemed men from the power of it, clothes His Omnipotence and Omniscience with a quality they otherwise could not have possessed.

The idea of the Lordship of Jesus is somewhat differently expressed in the titles applied to Him in Colossians, where He is called the "Image of the Invisible God," "First-born of all Creation," He through whom "all things were created," "the Fulness of God." So far as one can see there is no real development in the essential content of Paul's conception of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> There is no foundation for the statement that "it is a far cry from this simple creed" (say of Thessalonians) "to the Christological statements which we find in Colossians and Ephesians."<sup>2</sup> The simple creed of Thessalonians is really simple preaching to men and women either not capable of much abstract thought, or not far enough advanced in the Christian faith. An educated man like Paul, with that inner necessity to think out all that was contained in his religious experience, even in his pre-Christian days would have a philosophy of things, a "wisdom." The impact of Jesus upon his life was such that he had to rearrange all his thinking in order to give to Christ in his universe, the central place that He already had in his heart. Paul did not stop thinking when he became a Christian. His converts were, like all converts, composed both of "babes" (1 Cor. iii. 1), and of "the mature." He expressly reminds the Corinthians that his first preaching among them

<sup>1</sup> But *cf.* Sabatier, pp. 2ff.

<sup>2</sup> C. F. Andrews, "The Value of the Theology of St. Paul for Modern Thought," p. 20.

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had been of a very simple and unspeculative kind ; but he also tells them, " I speak of doctrine to those that are mature " (1 Cor. ii. 6). The philosophical terms he would employ might be used, and undoubtedly were used by him, in a loose and popular sense (as in Phil. ii. 5 *ff.*), and were no doubt sometimes suggested by the language of opponents. Accordingly it does not help us much to be told that " image of the invisible God " is a phrase found in Philo, or that " fulness " is known as a Gnostic term. Paul is thinking neither of Philo, nor of Gnosticism. He is entering into the thought of a particular propaganda which was based on a belief in certain intermediate angelic beings, and tended to undermine the exclusive and incommunicable place that Christ ought to occupy in Christian faith. It was no doubt taught that by communion with these, involving certain mystical experiences, a higher stage of religious life was reached.

Such spiritual beings appear in the heretical teaching as " the elements (*stoicheia*) of the Universe." (Col. ii. 8). They were probably not only regarded as personified natural forces as in Greek religion, but also as standing in a certain providential relationship to men. We have only to think of the worship of the saints in Roman Catholicism, of the immense amount of superstition that easily emerges in the average religion of other Churches, of the language of sects, or of Christian Science, to understand something of Paul's task in restoring Jesus Christ to a real and living place in the faith of the Colossian church. Again we must remember that when Paul speculates, he always has a deep ethical motive. In the case of Colossæ, the moral dangers seem to have been a selfish exclusiveness, leading to sins against brotherly love and the perpetuation of race

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and social distinctions (Col. iii. 11); and ascetism (ii. 21f) based on certain philosophical distinctions between the divine and the human, the spiritual and the material. In view of these deplorable results Paul is again inspired by an ethical motive, as in Phil. ii. 3ff, to reiterate the universal and pre-eminent place that Jesus has as the Saviour of the world. In face both of ascetism and caste distinctions, He appears as the Agent in the creation of the world of things and of men, although in God Himself is the creative power and will (Rom. xi. 36; cf. 1 Cor. viii. 6); as the "Image of the Invisible God," where "invisible" means also "unknowable," except through Christ. The "image" of God is the "glory" (*doxa*), or that in God which can be seen of men. Christ is the "fulness of God" (*plerōma*), in relation to the Church, a term which is meant to exclude all partial revelations of His divine grace and character through angelic beings. The fulness is the fulness or perfection of divine grace (cf. ii. 9). In other words, in the Incarnation, men have all that they need for salvation. Even the angelic beings, so far short do they come of the perfection, need to be reconciled to God "through the blood of the Cross" (i. 21), as also they owe their origin to Him (i. 16).

Moreover, Jesus is the "First-born of all creation." The word translated "first-born" (*prōtotokos*) seems to be used in no mere physical or temporal sense, but solely with the prerogative of the first-born in view, *viz.*, pre-eminence. Paul does not mean that Jesus is a "creature" of God.<sup>1</sup> Finally Jesus Himself is the "goal" of all creation,

<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that both the "fulness of God" and the "image of God," in Paul, can be communicated to men: but Christ's pre-eminence is ensured inasmuch as they, like "sonship," are derived through Him.

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as He is its hope" (Col. i. 16. *cf.* Romans viii. 19*ff.*). He is also the power, or the principle—as we would say, the moral order—behind and beneath "all things." "In Him the Universe coheres" (Col. i. 17). No doubt Paul owes something here to the Stoic idea of the world-reason or *logos*. Deprive Christ of His central creative and imperial place in the Universe, and Paul sees it sink back into the primæval chaos. His thought in Colossians may or may not owe much in its form of expression to a pre-Christian Messianic doctrine, or to the Alexandrian Logos-conception, or even to the mystery-religions, but the creative element is still his own experience of Jesus. Paul knew that he had met God in Christ. "Here, he felt, he touched the last reality in the Universe, the *ens realissimum*, the ultimate truth, through which and by relation to which all things must be defined and understood."<sup>1</sup> It is totally incorrect to speak of Paul as "deifying" Christ. He brings the Universe to the feet of Christ. He Christianises it.

The objection may be raised that Paul's conception of the Person of Jesus may be suitable to such a totally false scientific view of the Universe as that he adopts from the thought of his time, but is quite unsuitable to our saner scientific view. In this connection, one or two things may be said. "False" is much too strong a term to apply to any view of the Universe which represents a sincere effort of the human mind to understand its environment. The interpretation itself may become outworn; the instinct that sought it is eternal. To use the words of the Preacher in a somewhat alien sense, "He hath set the world in our heart." No scientific discovery has ever been made without the accompaniment of human emotion, a fact of which

<sup>1</sup> J. Denney, "Jesus and the Gospel," p. 37.

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Archimedes' "*Eureka*" is a symbol. Something within us leaps out to meet the new thing that has been revealed. The cold scientific temper is either a fallacy, or a deliberate repression of natural instincts, for reasons that may be good or bad. I imagine that it was not without some emotion even in the scientific world that the discovery of radium was received, and that former "atomic" theories crumbled therewith into dust. Moreover, it is well to note that Paul, as all Christians have to do, accepts the Universe as the thought of his time reveals it. It is a scientific fact to which he has to relate the fundamental facts of the Christian faith, the life and death of Jesus Christ. These he must preach in full view of life as he finds it. For most of us, the chief task is not to effect a compromise between Christianity and the thought of our time. Had Christianity at any stage come to terms completely with contemporary thought, the result would have been disaster. There is always something in the Christian faith that remains undissolved in the solution of modern thought in which it is held. There are gaps in Paul's thinking, as we have often seen, that remain unfilled. Why should *he* care, seeing that the world must pass away? Is our own conception of the possibilities of men, and of the nature of things, so invulnerable against the inroads of time with its fuller knowledge, that we can claim to say the last word on the Christian religion? God provides the new wine, and men provide the wine-skins. It is through individual men that His revelations in art, science, and music come. Pictures, discoveries, symphonies do not fall from heaven. They come to us through human genius, and they come from God. Is it against all precedent that in men like Paul, and in the members of the Christian Church in all ages,

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God should reveal Himself, in the Person of His own Son? Theories of Christ's person and place are inevitable. Paul had his, but he had more. He had the mind of Christ, the Lord Himself. Gratitude and wonder were his prevailing moods in the presence of Christ, not speculation. They were the emotions that accompany all great discoveries. If we listen carefully we shall hear in all his so-called theological passages the "sound of singing." Can we not hear it in Romans viii, and in Colossians everywhere? His dogmas are all doxologies. Always, in every age, in the Church's praises, rather than in its dogmas, is its Christology most clearly seen<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>"Not infrequently the first native contributions to a Christian literature take the forms of hymns." (World Missionary Conference, 1910. Vol. II., p. 124. *cf.* 1 Cor. xiv. 26.)



## IX

### THE DEATH OF CHRIST

PAUL is unique among New Testament writers in isolating the Cross as the chief factor in Christian experience. In this respect he is in accord with the consciousness of Jesus. The primitive preaching certainly gave a dominating place to the Cross of Christ. It could not do otherwise. It was occupied chiefly in connecting it with Old Testament prophecy, and thereby giving the fact a place in the eternal counsel and purpose of God. His death is "for the remission of sins," but the guilt and sin are those of the Jewish people. The primitive Church did not at first regard itself as cut off from the historical connection with the Jewish Church. There is no sense—rather the contrary—that the Law is abrogated. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus cannot yet give to the Christian by themselves that peace and hope, which are still dependent on obedience to the Jewish law. We have in their thought of the death of Christ a very distinctively Jewish colouring. On the one hand the death of the Messiah is regarded as a breach of God's purpose for the nation, which is set right by the Resurrection; and on the other, the event itself is foreseen and permitted by God, or is evidenced by passages in the Old Testament, like Isaiah liii. (*cf.* Acts ii. 23, iii. 18).

The guilt that lay on the nation had been expiated on the Cross, as the Resurrection proved. Of the Resurrection the earliest preachers were

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eye-witnesses (Acts ii. 31, 32 ; iii. 15 ; iv. 10). The nation is called on to repent. The sense of personal forgiveness cannot have been lacking to one who had sinned like Peter, or in the hearts of those who deserted Him as they did. Personal religion, however, did not yet fasten on the Cross as the supreme source of comfort, peace, and joy. It was reserved for Paul to give the central place in Christian thought to the Cross.

The usual and characteristic word that Paul uses to express the significance of the death of Jesus for the individual is "salvation" (*sōteria*.) Christianity from the first was a religion of "salvation," of deliverance from the evil powers of sin and death and sickness that had dominion in this present world, and from the coming Judgment of God. In the New Testament, as distinct from the Old Testament, salvation becomes characteristically individual as distinct from national. The idea of a salvation for the nation, which meant the setting up of a Messianic kingdom on earth, may have lingered even in the early Christian community, as Acts i. 6 shows ; but it had certainly become a much more deeply spiritual and ethical conception than that of contemporary Judaism. In order to understand Paul's peculiar contribution to the doctrine, it is necessary to have before our mind some more or less definite conception of the place salvation occupied in the primitive preaching. Briefly the view was that outlined in Acts iii. 19-21. Jesus Christ had been rejected by the nation, and would not be restored to them until they had "repented" of their sin in crucifying Him, and had "turned" again to Him in faith. A "breathing-space" is given to them, until the return of the Lord. Meantime the Lord must wait in heaven until the "time of the restoration of all things." The gift of the

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Spirit at Pentecost was the sign preliminary to the Judgment of the world, according to prophecy (Joel iii. 16). It was also the sign for those who received it, of their salvation as a present possession, to be perfected in the future. Yet the prevailing emphasis was laid on the future, and not on the present.

It is Paul's achievement that he gave a fuller and richer content to the idea of salvation as a present possession of the believer in Jesus. He did so by emphasising as he does, out of his own experience, the doctrine of the living Jesus who is present even now with His chosen people; and especially by transforming the conditions that determined the gift of salvation, from the legal conception of the necessity of "repentance and conversion," to the acceptance by faith of salvation already offered as a "gift," through the death of Jesus. He entirely emancipated Christian thought from a legal conception of "righteousness." Righteousness was originally a way of life in conformity with the law, and as such entitled the doer to the favour of God. The "righteousness" of which Paul speaks, is a way of life which is rendered possible only because God has set men free from the dominion of sin "in the flesh,"—that is, in the bodily life here, of which sin had taken possession—and has brought them into a right relation to Himself. This God has accomplished as an act of free grace, in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul taught the Church to give to the Cross that central, commanding and absorbing place that it occupied in the consciousness of Jesus Himself. He has here, if anywhere, "the mind of Christ." The primitive Church was rightly guided to Isaiah liii. as a proof of its belief that Christ died for our sins. Yet the idea of the vicarious suffering of Jesus is no mere reflection

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of the early Church. It was present to the mind of Jesus Himself who recognised His vocation in terms of this very chapter, definitely at least from the moment of the Baptism.<sup>1</sup>

1. It is quite clear that Paul speaks of the Death of Jesus constantly, not merely as a tragic historical incident, but as an event which had an unsharable place in his own continuous personal history and consciousness. It is a remarkable fact that of the word "cross," the only uses in the New Testament outside the Pauline writings are found in the Gospels, where the historical event naturally has a preponderating place, and in Heb. xii. 2. Similarly, the only uses of "crucify," apart from the Pauline writings, are, twice in Acts (ii. 36, iv. 10), once in Rev. (xi. 8), and once in Hebrews (vi. 6). In the primitive preaching the deep impression that the sufferings and death of Jesus made was too recent and too sorrowful to allow the preachers to regard it as a special source of confidence and joy. With Paul it is far otherwise, and the psychological reason is to be found in the fact that from the very first moment, even in pre-Christian days, it was the pre-occupation of all his thoughts.<sup>2</sup> None of the other apostles had been in a position to view it as an objective fact as he had. The crucifixion of Jesus made it impossible for him to recognise in Him the Messiah. In every fibre of his Jewish consciousness he shrank from the horror and shame and doom of it. He shared in the fanatical rage of the crowd, who were roused to fury against Stephen when, at a certain point in his speech, he dared to say that the death of Jesus was a murder (Acts vii. 52ff). Other thoughts of a very different kind were no doubt at work in his mind, but one feels that Paul himself

<sup>1</sup> cf. J. Moffatt, "The Theology of the Gospels," pp. 139ff.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 117f.

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might have taken up the pen in deepest remorse, to add that tragic parenthesis in his friend's account of the incident, "and Saul was consenting to his death" (Acts viii. 1). Certainly the Cross of Christ was no stranger to his thoughts in these pre-Christian days.

It is remarkable to notice the place that the actual historical incidents that centre round the death of Christ have in Paul's mind, as we see if we examine his writings carefully. He has given us a matchless picture of the Last Supper (1 Cor. xi. 23), and has prefaced his account by the statement that it took place "on the night in which he was betrayed." In this single phrase he has given us its dramatic setting. Are not the words of Romans xv. 3 a reference to the humiliations and insults he endured before Herod, Pilate, Caiaphas, and the cruel soldiery? More than once he speaks of "the sufferings of Christ" (2 Cor. i. 5); "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. iii. 10). It is more than probable that 2 Tim. iv. 16ff. is a distinctively Pauline saying. In his own great hour of need, the words of the same Psalm on which our Lord rested (Ps. xxii.) on the Cross, were his comfort also. "The jaws of the lion" are in his thoughts as in those of Jesus. It is the "Lord" that rescued him. (Ps. xxii. 20-22). His own sufferings constantly seem to run parallel to the sufferings of Christ, so that he can even say boldly that his own bodily sufferings are a continuation of the "afflictions of Christ" (Col. i. 24). Indeed, it is true to say that Paul's own suffering, which more than once he interprets vicariously, led him into the deeper truth of the Cross of Christ. Jesus "was crucified in His weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). He can also speak of His "joy" in the midst of suffering (1 Thess. i. 6). "I am crucified with Christ," he says in Gal. ii. 20, and he hastens to add that it is the love, for whose sake Christ

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went to the Cross, that is the sacred bond between them. It was on a cross of wood that He died (Gal. iii. 13), and He was fastened to it by nails (Col. ii. 14). Jesus is the Christian's Paschal Lamb (1 Cor. v. 7). A faithful picture of the Cross was evidently an element in all his missionary preaching. That picture was the result of his pre-occupation with the crucifixion both in pre-Christian and in Christian days. It was a picture that he expected to hold his converts, as it arrested him. "O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you—you who had Jesus Christ *placarded* before your very eyes" (Gal. iii. 1, Moffatt.)

Thus we are prepared for the fact that the Cross, always thought of together with the Resurrection, was the pivot on which the whole of Paul's personal religion turned. The appearance of the risen Jesus to him in His glory on the Damascus road was sufficient ground for an entire change of conviction regarding the meaning of the Cross. His former loathing and shame were turned into a passionate and adoring sense of the humiliation voluntarily undergone for the salvation of men. He is led to rank himself among the persecutors of Jesus, in the pursuit of the fanatical mission on which he was at the moment engaged, and in his former despising of the Crucified One. Just in proportion to his former loathing was now the power that drew him to the Cross of Christ. As the measure of his former horror was great, so great is now his adoring wonder. We have no need to search further for the origin of the terms, sometimes described as mystical, in which he speaks of the Cross. "To die with Christ," "to be baptised into His death"—we do not need to go to the mystery-religions for the origin of phrases like these.<sup>1</sup> They are simply

<sup>1</sup> pp. 254ff.



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attempts to express his innermost sense, aided by the outward pictorial ritual of baptism, that while he was yet an enemy of God, the divine love in Christ surged over his soul, like a flood. Paul is under the spell of deep emotion when he speaks of being "baptised into His death." The Cross was always a personal element in Paul's religion from first to last. It was in personal terms that he expressed the beginnings of the new life, and the salvation that sprang from the new experience. He speaks of "redemption," as one who was the slave of sin, and in bondage to the fear of death. He speaks of "justification," or "acquittal," as one whose conscience was never at rest; of "adoption," as one who had been admitted into the closest fellowship with God; of "reconciliation," as one who had been God's implacable enemy. It would be entirely wrong to say that this personal element is lacking in the primitive preaching. None who had companied with Jesus could ever forget that He had loved them, and that He became a part of their lives. Yet none of these earlier apostles and disciples came to see the full significance of the Cross, as Paul did.<sup>1</sup>

2. It is Paul who removed the Cross from its narrow Jewish setting, and has placed it in the centre of the world's history. The sacrifice of Christ was for all, and not only to expiate the sin of the Jewish nation. Paul is aware of a moral condition and a stirring in the Greek world, that told of the need for "salvation." "Conscience," a peculiarly Stoic term, had done for the Greek, what the Law

<sup>1</sup> "Paul even before he became a Christian, realised much more distinctly than any of the elder disciples before him the essential incompatibility of faith in the Crucified and the old religion of the law; it was simply the old hatred of the Pharisee for the suffering Messiah that enabled him to see so clearly all that was involved in the new faith in the Crucified One." Pfeiderer "Paulinism," I., p. 11.

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had done for the Jew. Through both came the knowledge of sin (Rom. ii. 12f). The only effectual salvation that Paul knew was "the Word of the Cross," as he sometimes describes his whole gospel; and by this expression he means that the Cross is not only a message but a fact, the fact of God's redeeming love. We may be quite sure that Paul, in the course of his mission to the Gentiles, obtained a deepening knowledge of the way in which a Jew would understand and feel the Cross; he won an equally discerning acquaintance with the Greek point of view on such a matter. The cry for "salvation" was a characteristic note of the religious life of the age. The mood has been thus described by a recent writer. "For some reason or other, men apparently had come to feel more keenly the inadequacy of a life limited by our bodily senses, to strain more and more, in tedium or disgust, or in some craving for a larger life, away from the world to the Unexplored beyond. . . . This is one of those shiftings of mood which come in the life of peoples as well as in that of individuals, hard to account for, except partially, hard often to grasp with any precision. A feeling came over men, and suddenly the familiar universe seemed a strange place, terrifying in its enormous magnitude—the earth stretching into regions of unexplored possibilities, moved and shaken by inhuman forces, and over all the silent enigma of the wheeling stars. They woke, as it were, to find themselves lost in the streets of a huge, strange city."<sup>1</sup> Paul did not *turn* Christianity into a religion of redemption. He heard the cry for salvation everywhere, and found that his message satisfied it.

If one were asked to isolate a conception which, more than any other, was fitted to be the common

<sup>1</sup> E. Bevan, "Stoics and Sceptics," pp. 97f.

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ground between pagan and Christian thought, the reply must be without hesitation, Paul's conception of "the flesh." One chief characteristic of Paul's genius was the power of grasping the idea that mattered. It was by means of this conception that the Cross of Christ was so presented by him to the world, as to be a gospel for Jew, Greek, and Barbarian alike; for all these are included in the scope of his Gentile mission. "I owe a duty to Greeks and to Barbarians, to wise and to foolish alike" (Romans i. 14). Now it was precisely this problem of "the flesh"—what might be called "human nature"—that was exercising the minds of the wisest, both among Jews and Greeks. The solutions given were divergent. The Jew recognised that the flesh was the seat of sinful impulses—not, as one cannot too often repeat, sinful in itself. He sought to dragoon it into submission by a moral code, the rudiments of which were given in a voice of thunder at Mount Sinai. His complete failure was obvious in the sheltered piety of the Pharisee; in the formation of a caste system; in a formalism which ignored the weightier matters of the law, such as justice and mercy, and devised a subtle system of casuistry, expounded by recognised teachers of the law. It left the bulk of humanity—"flesh"—outcast. The chief motives employed to promote obedience, were the fear of excommunication and of the Judgment of God. That the body was not regarded as in itself impure, is evidenced by the insistence upon ceremonial purity. The Greek, on the other hand, had come to regard the body as "the prison-house" of the soul. Within it was a being of immortal nature, that yearned to be free and to unite itself again with the Divine, whence it had come. Such was the prevailing Stoic doctrine which dominated the thought of the time. Redemption or salvation

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consisted in suppressing the bodily appetites, in a wise control of the passions, in quenching emotions of pity and love, which might, if freely exercised, cause inward disturbance and grief. Certain things were "beyond our power," such as sickness, physical pain, and death. These have no real ability to hurt us, if we make up our minds that they have none. Pain is simply an erroneous judgment of the human mind, like sin itself.

Now Paul, the Christian, is not interested in systems of thought, as such, whether Jewish or Greek. Pharisaism had failed conspicuously in his own case. The description of the pagan world of his day in Romans i. 21*ff.* is evidence of the failure of Græco-Roman philosophy. Both Judaism and Hellenism had failed to touch the common man—humanity—the weak and the foolish. Paul the Christian, had learned to care supremely for these. Among other things, he never forgot that Jesus Christ had intervened to protect the lives of a few obscure, weak, and inconspicuous men and women in Damascus. In these and their like, he had seen the fear of death removed by faith in Jesus Christ. Paul's was a gospel that recognised the illimitable possibilities of the common man, touched by the grace of Christ. The wisdom of the sage is destroyed, and the insight of the wise is confounded. "Sage, scribe, critic of this world where are they all? Has not God stultified the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. i. 19*f.*, Moffatt). Not education, but regeneration, is Paul's secret. Paul had a great yearning for what the Greek would call the "stupid" man, and the Jew "the sinner." It was the yearning of Christ Himself. The kingdom of God was a great democracy:—

"Why, look at your own ranks,<sup>1</sup> my brothers ;

<sup>1</sup> Moffatt.

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not many wise men—as men count wise—not many men of influence, not many of good family have heard the call. Nay, God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God has chosen the mean and despised things of the world—things which are not—to put down things that are; that no man<sup>1</sup> may pride himself in the presence of God. This is the God that made you what you are in Christ Jesus, whom God has made our “wisdom,” in other words our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. So then, as it is written, ‘He that prideth himself, let him pride himself in the Lord’” (1 Cor. i. 26-31).

Thus, with an unerring instinct, Paul fastened on “the flesh,” “humanity,” “human nature,” as the all-important question, from the human side, for salvation. This question was absorbing the attention of the world, Jewish and Gentile. Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, came “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” and condemned sin “in the flesh” (Romans viii. 3). The very fact of the Incarnation was in itself an ennoblement of human nature, but it is not on this aspect of it that Paul lays stress. That is rather characteristic of the Johannine point of view. The Death of Jesus is not merely, for him, the culminating point of His moral life in the flesh. His Death is the exclusive means of salvation. His gospel could be defined exclusively as the “Word of the Cross.” As such it was unintelligible to those who were wedded to the systems of thought regarding human life and its possibilities, represented by Judaism and Hellenism. Christ crucified is “to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.” The Jew longed for a “sign,” some miraculous display of power on the part of

<sup>1</sup> Lit. “flesh.”

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God. They desired that by sheer violence, by means of a law promulgated amid thunders and lightnings, with dire penalties attached, or by some signal and compelling manifestation of power from heaven, "flesh" should be made subservient to the authority of God. To them the Cross meant only weakness. Love that seemed to have no external divine authority behind it was futile, and an imposture. "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross;" "save thyself." On the other hand the Cross and all that it implied was a direct contradiction of what the Greek conceived human nature ought to be. Socrates and Hercules were its ideals of wisdom and of strength respectively. Pity was a vice, inasmuch as it kept the soul enchained in the "flesh." Love was wrong when it led men to mourn, at the loss of wife or child. These emotions disturbed that "apathy," that lofty detachment from things of sense, which was the ideal of the wise. Not that the Greek discouraged philanthropy; but his ideal philanthropist was Hercules, or Alexander, or the Emperors. His philanthropy required irresistible power behind it, and is the direct opposite of Luke xxii. 25f. Gethsemane would appear as a moral break-down. Was Jesus not disturbed and disquieted by sorrow? Did He not endure agonies of spirit and of body on the Cross? Is this not the mark of the "foolish" man, to allow himself to be thus inwardly disturbed by evil, pain, and death? "When a man," says a Stoic, "suffers sickness and death, he must sicken and die as becomes a god."

Now Paul's message of the Cross was so universal because it took such full and clear account of all that the ordinary man knew to be most real—pain, sin, and death. The Cross meant that God had taken these human burdens on Himself in Jesus Christ,



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and in the Resurrection of the Crucified One offered life to all. It enabled men to live no longer "to the flesh," but "to the spirit." Men still lived "*in the flesh*;" they needed not to lay upon it burdens of authoritative commandments, nor to escape from it, in order to enter into fellowship with God. Man has been redeemed as he is. Jesus is the Representative Man of the new order of being, a new "righteousness" or "way of moral life." "Righteousness" consists neither in obedience to law, nor in the attainment of a higher knowledge. It is the inevitable result of the new "life" working in those who have become "sons of God," by adoption, and have been redeemed from slavery to law, or to passion.

3. Paul's preaching of the Cross of Christ was calculated to meet the thought of his time in another respect also. *It had a cosmic significance.* We have already seen that in Jewish religious thought the Law was a constituent principle of the Universe itself. They signified their belief in this by developing the doctrine that it was delivered into the hands of Moses by "angels." Even without this doctrine, the thunders of Sinai expressed the same idea. Sin, sickness, and death were really the work of hostile demonic powers, who had enslaved men's wills and lives. Even "sickness" is called "a messenger of Satan," and sin is his suggestion. He may clothe himself as "an angel of light" in order to carry out his nefarious schemes.

The system of thought that pervaded the Greek world at the time was parallel in its conception of the Universe. It had become a terrifying place. Natural principles were personified. We have already seen that the popular religion of Hellenism was prevailingly animist. In Colossians especially, we see how easily in the Diaspora,

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Jewish and Hellenistic thought regarding the Universe, and man's relation to it, had become mingled. Not only was the Law an ordinance of angels, but its individual prescriptions of "touch not, taste not, handle not," were ultimately connected with the necessity of preserving right relations with angels and spirits. Its feasts, and calendar systems were easily connected with worship of, and deference to, the spirits of the sun, moon, and heavenly bodies. Even in Galatians, the Judaizing party found it easy to identify the commands of the law with the necessity of obedience to the "weak and beggarly elements," *i.e.*, to the elemental spirits that controlled the forces of nature. Not only did Paul meet this type of thought by his doctrine that Jesus was the Agent in creation, but he went further. The annulment of the Jewish law by the Death of Jesus was only part of a great cosmic drama, with an issue and a significance that were universal. Judaism was not the only form of religious legalism. In the Cross, Jesus not only brought about our forgiveness, and cancelled the death-dealing obligation under which men lay on account of a broken divine law. He also "despoiled the principalities and the powers, exposed them for what they are, and triumphed over them in the Cross" (Col. ii. 14 *f.*). It was they—"the demonic rulers of this world,"—who "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8 *f.*).<sup>1</sup> The Cross was the greatest moral disaster in history; the whole hierarchy of evil was massed against the Lord of Glory and slew Him. It was also the greatest triumph in history. God raised Him up. This is a message for Greek as well as for Jew. It is again a legitimate inference from Paul's own experience on the Damascus road. As we have

<sup>1</sup> See p. 62.

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already seen, that had for him also, as an individual, a cosmic significance. It made him a citizen of a new world-order. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation."

Thus the Cross, as followed by the Resurrection, meant two things of infinite importance for practical life. (1) That no Christian need any longer fear the malignant influence of the demonic powers.<sup>1</sup> Jesus is Lord over them as He is of His people, to whom He is bound by a tie as unbreakable as His redeeming love itself (Romans viii. 35). (2) The Death of Jesus must be looked upon as the exclusive means of salvation. No legal ordinances are any longer valid; for the powers that ordained them—even the angels that administered the ancient divine law—are either superseded or overcome.<sup>2</sup>

4. The reader will, however, still feel that we have not yet struck the note that is heard in all Christian experience of the Cross of Christ. What is it in Paul's doctrine of the Cross that particularly corresponds to the supreme achievement of Christianity? By what means is a bad man made good, or how is peace given to a guilty conscience? How is it brought about by faith in the Cross of Christ, that a man is delivered from that most tragic and universal result of all sin, the sense that morally it can never be otherwise with him than it is—in other words, the sense of guilt? We may be perfectly sure that Paul's own experience, so graphically described in Romans vii., and his knowledge of ordinary human psychology would not allow him to forget this main point. Any exposition of his thought must not lag behind the practical results that men have achieved through his teaching. In a sense, all exposition of Christian doctrine must be inadequate to express the supreme

<sup>1</sup> See p. 108.    <sup>2</sup> cf. Moffatt, "Paul and Paulinism," pp. 59f.

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achievement of the Christian faith, the transformation of human character. Paul himself felt this strongly: "What I said, what I preached did not rest on the plausible arguments of 'wisdom,' but on the proof supplied by the Spirit and its power" (1 Cor. ii. 4, Moffatt). To him the gospel is ultimately "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans i. 16). The gospel has proved itself a "dynamic." Paul is simply recording facts, when he expresses in terms of human thought, what the Cross of Christ has *done* for him, and through him for his converts.

There are in Paul two main directions which his thought takes on this subject, when he sets forth his theory of the Death on the Cross. They correspond to two main facts in his own pre-Christian experience. One is the slavery of the Law, that great divine commandment which he found it impossible to keep, The sense of being compelled to disobey it, while all the time he assented to it, crushed him under a weight of guilt and impending doom. The other is the sense of sin, as an evil power dwelling in his flesh, having dominion over his whole personality. The two are not unconnected. Neither is possible without the other. "When the commandment came, sin sprang to life." Yet it is important to distinguish them.

(1) The slavery of the Law belongs to Paul's distinctively Jewish inheritance. There is an element in it common to all human experience, but the essentially Jewish point of view that it involves, must be regarded, if we are to estimate aright the permanent worth of Paul's conception that Jesus, on the Cross—of His own free-will, and in love—took our place, and died in our stead. To make such a doctrine reflect on the character of God, as is so often done by objectors to-day, is

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simply to display an inadequate conception of the person of Christ as understood by Paul. On a purely humanitarian interpretation of Christ, the objection is one of the most powerful and cogent that could possibly be urged. If, however, we give to Jesus the place that Paul gives Him, the idea of a vicarious sacrifice in the Cross of Christ, assumes the proportion of a magnificent act of divine self-sacrifice and self-humiliation. We cannot state this aspect of Paul's view of the atoning death of Jesus more clearly than in Dr. Moffatt's words.\* "Jesus, voluntarily took the place of sinful men as they lay under the curse and condemnation of a Law whose statutes they were unable to keep. To his sombre vision, as he looked behind and around him, sin and death, like allied powers, were crushing men with all the added momentum they had acquired during the ages since Adam first disobeyed. But Jesus interposed. The innocent suffered for the guilty. He graciously bore in His own person the consequence of sin for men, and this vicarious endurance of sin's penalty availed before God to justify or save from the divine wrath at the end, all who accepted Him as the Christ of God."

The foregoing is, we believe, a fundamentally correct view of one aspect of Paul's theory of the Cross, and can be proved again and again from statements in his writing, as interpreted in their obvious sense, *e.g.*, Gal. iii. 13; Col. ii. 14. The further consideration of this aspect of Paul's teaching must be deferred to the chapter on Justification.

(2) There is, however, another direction—the determining one—in which Paul's thought regarding the Cross of Christ expresses itself. He is conscious of the external authority which the Law

\* "Paul and Paulinism," p. 44.

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imposed on him, and which roused his conscience to the sense of guilt. He is also conscious of what he calls a law "in his members," an authority and dominion which sin has gained in his flesh. Not only is he unable to fulfil the Law's demands, interpreted as his conscience interpreted them, but he is actively prevented from doing so by a rival authority or sinful impulse within.<sup>1</sup> It is as though the man consisted of two selves. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that makes its abode in me" (Romans vii. 17).<sup>2</sup> Now Paul is continually aware that through the appearance of the living Christ, the power or authority of sin is broken and crushed within him. "Reckon ye yourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Romans vi. 11). That Jesus lives, was the first great fact in Paul's experience that arrested his attention, and won his personal allegiance.

It was not merely a mental illumination. He felt that something great had been done for him and in him. A new life animated his being, and he felt himself in possession of a peace and freedom and hope, such as he had never known. This expressed itself in a sense of deepest gratitude; gratitude for the love that captured the persecutor on the Damascus road, for the immediate conviction that this love can only be the love of God, and for the sense that new life was poured into his

<sup>1</sup> If in Romans we translate "law" by "authority," in many places it will clarify the thought. Sin is a wider term than "law." "I had not known sin, except for the law." "When the command came, sin sprang to life and I died." The "law of sin" is really its authority.

<sup>2</sup> "It is safe for a Christian like Paul—it is not safe for everybody—to explain his failings by the watchword, Not I but indwelling sin. That might be antinomian, or manichean, as well as evangelical. A true saint may say it in a moment of passion, but a sinner had better not make it a principle."—Denney, "Expositor's Greek Testament," *in loco*.



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whole being, and that he now inhabits a totally new order of things. As his thought played upon the great experience, his former life appeared as a life of enmity against God.

We cannot here enter into a discussion of the term "reconciliation." High critical authorities contend that the reconciliation is mutual, and that Paul means by the term, that God's anger was directed against him, and was now removed ; but to interpret the term "reconciliation" as implying enmity only on man's side, is not necessarily to evacuate the New Testament conception of the wrath of God of all content. The words, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," were the centre of Paul's subsequent thought. They imply enmity on his side, and a patient love on the side of Jesus. When Paul speaks of being reconciled to God, he means precisely the acceptance of that act of grace on God's part which he afterwards describes as being made "a son." It is to receive the spirit of "sonship." Jesus is free to proclaim this "sonship" as a gift for all men. He is now the Son of God, "with power" (Romans i. 3). But Paul also speaks of our being "reconciled by His death." What does he mean? The thought of the Death of Christ as an expiatory death cannot be prominent in the case of such passages as 2 Cor. v. 14ff. Otherwise he could hardly say that "all have died." "I am controlled by the love of Christ, convinced that as One has died for all, then all have died, and that He died for all in order to have the living live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again for them. . . . There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ ; what is old is gone, the new has come. It is all the doing of God who has reconciled me to Himself through Christ" (Moffatt).

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"If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life." In the Death of Jesus, as in His Life, which was his first real point of contact with Jesus, Paul saw displayed the love of God. A humiliating and shameful death was the channel that led to his heart, from the heart of God. Death is inseparable from life. "He died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. v. 10). "For to this end, Christ both died and rose and came to life, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living." The giving of our trust or "faith" to Christ—which for Paul was an instinctive act the moment He appeared to him in glory—united him with Christ, and at one stroke crushed the authority of sin. The "lordship" or power of Christ, holds sway in his heart, instead of the power of indwelling sin. This is the positive result for Paul of the Christ who died and rose again for his sake. The negative side is expressed in "dying to sin" (Romans vi. 11). This is not equivalent to being unconscious of it, or to ignoring it. To "die to sin" in Paul's language means to throw off its authority; to "live to Jesus" is to acknowledge His authority.

The love of Jesus is the controlling power in his life. It "constrains" him (2 Cor. v. 14). Paul heaps metaphor upon metaphor to express this sense of deliverance from the dominion of sin. Christians are "buried with Him in baptism," and "raised in Him by faith in the power of the God who raised Him from the dead." "Dead in trespasses," they "are made to live in fellowship with Him" (Col. ii. 11-13). "Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). It is no merely pictorial likeness that Paul sees between

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His dying and ours, as though His was bodily and ours is spiritual. A real power of life is communicated to us from Christ's dying in order to live. It is quite unnecessary to trace any influence of the mystery-religions<sup>1</sup> here. Their forms of thought might form a point of contact in the minds of his readers; but the conception is an expression of a real new power that communicated itself to him through faith in the risen Christ. The risen Jesus, in another metaphor, is the second Adam, "a life-giving spirit."

It is quite impossible to think that the other view—the forensic view—of Christ's death occupied the dominating place in Paul's theology that is sometimes given to it. The gateway to Paul's thought of the Death of Jesus is not found in the idea of justification, but in that of adoption. The key to his mind is the doctrine of the life-giving "Spirit," and of the new Life that it gives. The forensic view of the atonement is much more the product of controversy than any other of Paul's ideas can be said to be. It is none the less valuable on that account, and must not be rejected because it is uncongenial to the modern mind. It tells of God's justice, an attribute which too long has been in the background of our modern thoughts. We cannot realise the divine Personality, as Haering says finely,<sup>2</sup> without being compelled to think of it as "life capable of being moved to its utmost depths." That "life in Christ," of which Paul speaks, is fully described as love; and love moved to its utmost depths is essentially justice. Otherwise, it is unworthy of the name either of "eternal" or of "divine." Yet it is through the idea of "Christ in us" that we shall be able to understand Paul's conception of "Christ for us."

<sup>1</sup> pp. 225ff.

<sup>2</sup> "The Christian Faith," II., 495.

## X

# JUSTIFICATION

PAUL speaks of Justification mostly in Galatians and in Romans. There the doctrine emerges as a polemical exposition of that freedom and vitality of faith, which, in his own experience, resulted from the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. All the time, the positive idea of religious liberty is uppermost in his mind. That this is so we shall see, if we realise the historical struggle for freedom that lies behind. It is more epoch-making than any such struggle in the history of the world, although conducted in an infinitely narrow arena. Justification is really a negative expression, containing a positive idea.

1. By piecing together the narrative of Acts, and the historical references in Galatians, we are enabled to envisage the actual concrete situation that is involved. The question that threatened to divide the apostolic Church centred around the observance of the Jewish Law. Is it necessary that that Law should be observed within the Christian Church? Paul's practice in his missionary activity was that the Law of Moses is no longer binding on the Gentile Christian. He himself had found in the Cross of Christ that which delivered him from legal bondage. By a Christian instinct he went direct to the Gentiles with his message; for, as one "in Christ," was he not also in "a new creation," a new moral and spiritual order altogether? The peace with God that he so desired

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was given him as a free gift in the appearance of Jesus to him, irrespective of any legal standing and attainment. Moreover, for some years, in response to his preaching, the Spirit of God had been visibly at work in the lives of his Gentile converts. In Galatians i. 16ff, Paul gives an account of his movements after his conversion. It is not possible in all respects to harmonise it exactly with the account in Acts. In any case, if there are discrepancies the account in Acts must yield to the autobiographical details in Galatians.<sup>1</sup> There we are told that for some fourteen years Paul had conducted his mission in Syria and Cilicia, interrupted only by one visit to Jerusalem to see Peter, a visit that had no bearing on the doctrine he taught.<sup>2</sup> The requirements of the Jewish law were not imposed on his converts. Congregations of Christians were formed who neither were Jews, nor were required to keep the Law. During this period there was no open conflict between Paul's methods and the respect in which the Jewish law was held in the mother-church at Jerusalem. The question had not arisen. The Jerusalem church had merely heard of the success of Paul's work, and rejoiced in it. "I was unknown by face to the Christian churches in Judæa. All that they had heard was, 'our former persecutor is now preaching the faith which once he sought to destroy;' and they praised God on my account" (Gal. i. 22-24).

<sup>1</sup> The account in Galatians is, however, not quite clear. Paul's thought moves too quickly for that. His passion for Christian freedom urges him on like a torrent. "The question of Christian freedom was too hot in his heart to leave him free for reminiscence."—T. R. Glover, "Conflict of Religions," p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. i. 18. The Greek word translated "visit" (A.V.) seems to mean "make enquiry of." Apparently the visit concerned some question of a purely practical nature. It may have been connected with the problem of Paul's future sphere of labour after he was driven from Damascus. (cf. Rendall, Galatians, "Expositor's Greek Testament," *in loco*.)

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At last, however, a change came over the situation. There appeared among the Pauline congregations certain Jews who were Christians and called themselves "brothers"—"false brothers," says Paul (Gal. ii. 4). They came in stealthily for the purpose of finding out what Paul really taught. Paul was not nearly so much of a problem to hostile Jews, as he was to Jewish Christians. The hostile Jews recognised at once what Paul stood for, and hated him. Jewish Christians, who had become Christian by another road than Paul, and retained their old instinctive obedience to the Law, could not make him out, and therefore distrusted him. Christianity was indeed at the cross-roads, and the unbelieving Jew recognised the crisis more quickly than the Church. These representatives of the Jerusalem Church were shocked to find that Christians in Antioch and other places where Paul's converts were found, neither were circumcised nor did they observe the requirements of the Law. "Is this," they said, "what Paul calls 'freedom'?" Surely it is a dangerous thing to throw over the moral restraints of the Law even in certain apparently subordinate particulars. It means that the whole system is brought into disrepute, and it is God's law. This liberty may easily become licence. This is not how things are done in Jerusalem. Peter and John and James, 'pillars' of the church, and men who surely knew Jesus better than any other, still direct their lives by the precepts of the Law. Who is Paul that he should promulgate a new religion of this kind, one evidently that has no moral code? Is he really an apostle? The immediate disciples of Jesus are the 'authorities' on this matter. The authority of Paul cannot be set alongside theirs for a moment."



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We can imagine what must have been the effect on a man of Paul's vehement temper, and strong religious convictions, of such an invasion of that Christian liberty which he had learned so to prize. The whole of Galatians is tremulous with a burning sense of wrong. The language is at points very vehement indeed, but is characterised by a fine restraint; Paul is always able to seize upon the salient points of the case. He is not conscious of personal opposition to the Jerusalem apostles. His scorn is directed against those who were giving them a status and authority in the Church, which Paul knew to be out of keeping with the mind of Christ, and also in fairness it must be said, to their own mind also. At the same time Paul's human anxiety is very apparent in connection with the whole situation. He fears lest a wedge of discord be driven into the life of the churches he loved. Paul realised, perhaps for the first time, all the consequences of the abrogation of the Law. Discord might mean, as he most pathetically says, that his whole life, past and present, was wasted; "lest by any means I should run or had run in vain" (Gal. ii. 2). It is this anxiety, in obedience to a revelation of divine guidance, that leads him to visit Jerusalem again. Paul will not have the Body of Christ rent in twain. He tells us that his visit was amply justified. His brethren at Jerusalem fully recognised that he had been entrusted with a gospel for the uncircumcised (v. 7). No limitation was imposed on his gospel by them. That he had received from God alone (i. 1). The Church at Jerusalem fully recognised his apostleship. Titus, a Greek, whom he took with him, who was himself one of the fruits of his Gentile mission, was not compelled to submit to the rite of circumcision. Behind these hurrying statements in Gala-

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tians, there must lie certain significant facts which we can only with fair probability conjecture. Paul's enemies had by this time also returned to Jerusalem, after working much mischief in the Syrian and Cilician churches. They would no doubt accuse him of encouraging licence, and make the demand that Titus should be circumcised. The demand was refused. Gal. ii. 7,8 must be read in connection with Peter's speech in Acts xv. 7ff., especially the statement in v. 12, "The whole meeting was subdued to silence, and listened to Paul and Barnabas as they recounted the signs and wonders that God had wrought by them, among the Gentiles." They recognised, as Paul says in Gal. ii. 8, the grace that had been given him. Paul had a gospel already, before the explicit question of justification appeared on the horizon. The results of it were already manifest. These were stultified, if the Judaising position was correct (Gal. iii. 3ff.).

Another account of this visit is given in Acts xv. It is not inconsistent with the story told in Galatians ii., except in one important particular, the decree mentioned in vv. 20, 21. About this decree, Paul is completely silent in Galatians, and never mentions it elsewhere. A certain Western reading of the text omits "and from things strangled," and inserts the words, "and not to do to another what ye will not have happen to yourselves." This, however, hardly removes the difficulty. It still retains the strange expression, "It appears good to the Holy Spirit and to us," which involves a conception of the organisation and authority of the mother-church, which is an anachronism.<sup>1</sup> It is also impossible

<sup>1</sup> "Whether they liked it or not, the Christian community seem loyally to have submitted themselves to the 'Spirit of Jesus.' 'It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us,' tells the story of their deliberations, whether they put the phrase at the top of a resolution or not."—T. R. Glover, "Conflict of Religions," p. 168.

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to think that Paul, even although he approved the recommendations, would have approved the legalistic form in which they were cast. There seems no alternative but to suppose that Luke seeks to "round off the ragged edges of the controversy," and may have antedated a decree which was promulgated at a later period in the history of the Jerusalem church. He fails to appreciate the true catholicity of *attitude* which was taken up by the leaders of the Church towards Paul.<sup>1</sup>

The trouble, however, was not ended. Peter, soon after the Jerusalem conference, paid a visit to Antioch, where, at the moment, Paul was at work. The Judaisers, Paul's enemies, followed soon after. A difficulty arose in connection with the Love Feast, which was always followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The custom in the Pauline churches was that Jew and Gentile Christian should sit down together, without any questions asked as to the legal standing of either. A strict Jew was not allowed to eat with anyone who was not a Jew; in these communities there was already neither Jew nor Greek. Peter, when he came, concurred in the situation as he found it. He was followed, however, by certain representatives of the Jerusalem church, "certain who came from James," who were no doubt sent in order to strengthen further that now existent bond between the Jewish and Gentile churches.<sup>2</sup> Again these "emissaries" are shocked at the disregard of the Law that prevailed, when they saw circumcised and uncircumcised sharing the common meal. Peter was so

<sup>1</sup> See Moffatt, "Literature of the New Testament," pp. 307-8.

<sup>2</sup> Moffatt translates, "Certain emissaries of James," as though the way in which they carried out their commission would have been approved by him. "It is not improbable, however, that they came invested with some powers from James, which they abused."  
—Lightfoot, Galatians, *in loco*.

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impressed by their objections that he recanted his former practice. Paul "withstood him to the face," and accused him of playing false, through fear of the circumcision party. All the Jewish Christians, and even Barnabas, sided with Peter. Paul stood alone as the champion of Christian freedom. His words in Gal. ii. 14-21, are composed partly of those he spoke on the occasion, and partly of words addressed to the particular Galatian situation. They are strong words that he utters to Peter and the others; they are not stronger than the situation warranted. He says that Peter stood "self-condemned," and specifically accusing him also of moral cowardice, he characterises their whole attitude as "hypocrisy," or "absence of straight dealing." The man is indeed "vehemently present" in these utterances, but to speak of him as "losing his temper," is exaggeration. He was undoubtedly very angry, but his anger was born of righteous resentment, deep anxiety for the Church of Christ, and sure conviction. Of any slighting reference to the apostles who were not present, there is no trace whatever. Paul deals with the men and the situation they had created, on the spot. "Pillars" and "authorities" are not Paul's names for the leaders of the Jerusalem church. He is quoting the expressions used by his enemies.

2. It is out of such a stormy controversy, that Paul's expression "justified by faith" is born. The controversy is unhappily present with him throughout the whole of his ministry. Barnabas and Peter undoubtedly came to understand his meaning, but the Judaising emissaries dogged his footsteps wherever he went. They appeared among the Galatian churches, at Corinth, in Rome, and even at Colossæ. Ideally they represent the position of the morally earnest in all ages. The Jewish

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law, in their view, was the expression of the ultimate moral principle of the Universe. They are akin to those who can only suspect danger to the fabric of Christianity, in the advance of religious thought; in the historical criticism of the Scriptures; in the growing conviction that the efficiency of Church and Sacraments does not depend on any historical succession in the ministry, on ancient credal forms, or upon any theory of the organism through which certain experiences, common to all Christians, are derived. It is not merely that their conception of morality is legal; their whole "*Weltanschauung*," religious and ethical, is legal. It is "rationalism" in another form, and means that the Christian life is ultimately dependent on a certain intellectual attitude.

Paul did not coin the word, "justification." It was a word that would be quite common in the language of his Judaising opponents. It really means "acquittal" at the tribunal of God.<sup>1</sup> The conception was that every day a man was being judged. The Jew recognised that breaches of the Law were unavoidable. He even recognised that external conformity was not enough. A man must subdue the sinful "*yezer*" or impulse within him.<sup>2</sup> But his standing before God depended on whether his good works at any moment preponderated over the evil ones. If the balance was nearly equal, God might in His mercy press down the scale. Even the expression, "justification by faith" is found in Jewish writings, where faith may mean the desire to do right, or merely the acknowledgment of monotheism. Yet it must be

<sup>1</sup> So in the LXX. version of Exod. xxxiii. 7; Deut. xxv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The theory was that the Law was given in order that the sinful impulse might be mastered. Paul denies this, and says that the Law actually "aggravates" sin. Rom. vii. 7, 8. cf. Moffatt, "Paul and Paulinism," p. 50.

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supplemented by works. A man is constantly laying up a store of good works or a store of demerits, in heaven, before God (2 Esdr. vii. 77). Even the righteousness of the ancient Fathers might be "imputed" to men.<sup>1</sup> A thought akin to this is found in the later prophets (Jer. xv. 1; Ezek. xiv. 14ff.; cf. Genesis xviii. 23ff.). The thought of such passages as 2 Cor. v. 21, Phil. iii. 9, however, can hardly be regarded as an application of this Jewish idea of "imputation" to the Death of Christ. Paul never uses such an expression as the imputation of the "righteousness" or "merit" of Christ. Indeed it is certain that the Pauline doctrine of "justification" cannot be explained fully either from contemporary Jewish thought, or from the thought of the Old Testament. It is an attempt to express a new discovery in religion. The discovery was not Paul's. The idea is prominent both in the teaching, and in the attitude of Jesus Himself towards sinful men. Zacchæus is a signal example of it, and the scandal to Judaism was that Jesus made Himself the friend of, and went to the home of Zacchæus, as though he had been another kind of person altogether than a publican and a sinner. And the moral result is seen in Zacchæus' new-born generosity. A skin-flint has become a generous man; a dishonest man has recognised in his conscience the claims of honesty; a bad man has been made good. The ring and the robe and the fatted calf in the Parable of the Prodigal Son are really pictorial representations of what Paul means by "justification." The same idea is found in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

We have already seen that the necessities of controversy led him to use the term. He is led

<sup>1</sup> H.St.J. Thackeray, "St. Paul and Jewish Thought," pp. 88 ff.



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to use a term that—unless we recognise the historical matrix from which it springs—involves us in endless difficulty of interpretation for the modern mind. So puzzling is it that when we read that God “justifies the ungodly” (Romans iv. 5), it is no wonder that we are inclined to say that “justify” can only mean “make righteous.” No greater error could be imagined. Paul’s doctrine is a bold and daring conception, which to the morally earnest of his day gave great offence, and to the morally lax might and did afford an opportunity for moral licence. “Shall we sin that grace may abound?” “Paul makes the reconciling favour of God clothe itself in the categories of a judicial act which is really the exact opposite of it.”<sup>1</sup>

The word is perhaps best translated “acquittal,” which still conveys an inadequate meaning. It was a word in common use in contemporary religious thought. It meant that the scales were weighed down in favour of the sinner. Just because of that common use, Paul is compelled to retain it, for purposes of controversy. He presses into it, however, a sense that it hardly bears. By it he means not that “guilt” has been disproved or even overlooked; it has been removed. “Guilt” is the religious expression for a “bad conscience,” which, in its turn, is the religious affirmation and recognition of God’s holiness. Paul means that it has been removed, in the sense that it is no longer a barrier on God’s side. “God commended His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God treats the sinner as though he were not guilty.

It is untrue to say, on these grounds, that the Christian life begins with a fiction.<sup>2</sup> Justifica-

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer, “Paulinism,” I., 184.

<sup>2</sup> e.g., Sanday and Headlam, “Romans,” p. 36.

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tion by faith is no fiction. The justification is as real as the faith is real. Faith is man's answer to a real approach toward him in His love, on God's part. It is no "fiction" when the erring son is broken down by receiving from his mother an unchanged, if sorely wounded, love. "Faith" is a judgment of the whole personality, that God means what He has said and done, in the love and power manifested in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is also unswerving daily fidelity to such a judgment, the belief that God, when He raised Jesus from the dead, equally means us to "become what we are." Justifying faith means this, and more. Faith undoubtedly does include the idea of believing certain facts about Jesus Christ to be true; it may also include, as in Paul's case, the relation of these facts to others in our minds, thus unifying our scheme of thought; but the primary idea that saturates even these aspects of faith which have been mentioned is that of personal trust. Too much stress cannot be laid on the fact that in the Pauline doctrines, both of sanctification and justification, a relationship is intended between living persons, the living God and living men; not between moral forces germinating in a dead past.

In Paul's own experience, faith was born first of all in the assurance that came in the appearance of Jesus to him, that He, the Crucified One, was alive. The one thing Paul had been certain of before was, that Jesus had died a death of shame and ignominy, and as such was worthy only of reprobation. Yet this new faith of his inevitably and immediately blossomed into personal trust. Paul could not "resist" Jesus Christ. He was laid hold of, "apprehended." Faith in the Resurrection, as he understood it for himself and for every

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Christian, was seated in the heart. "If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans x. 9). This is the faith that "saves," that "justifies." In the same passage he describes "faith" as "obedience." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord" (*cf.* vv. 3, 16). This inward recognition of Jesus as Lord, implies also a subjection of the will to His dominion. It cannot be too much emphasised that this "obedience" is primarily religious, and ethical only so far as it has ethical results. "The Pauline faith is an act of obedience exclusively in a religious sense, namely, as an act of self-determination, that consists in renouncing everything of our own, so far as it could stand in opposition to the favourable will of God towards us, or form a ground of self-glorification, whether in the shape of natural advantages, or moral acts or claims, or even inherited opinions and prejudices flattering to our self-love, and giving ourselves up wholly to the favourable will of God."<sup>1</sup> It is the opposite of this that Paul means by "seeking our own righteousness" (Romans x. 3), or "trusting in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 4). For him it meant a very real sacrifice of "all things" that to a Pharisee were not only dear, but, as it were, bred in the bone. What it involved, he describes in Phil. iii. 3*ff.* And to this were superadded, doubtless, the severance of dearest ties, grave financial loss, and abandonment of social position. "For His sake," he says, "I have lost everything" (v. 8). His life was a fuller replica of the losses of those who, in the days of His flesh, "left all and followed Him." He does not even regard these sacrifices as meritorious; for the absence of the sense of merit is the origin of the strong and easily

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer, "Paulinism," I., 165.

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misunderstood statement of v. 8, "I count it all but refuse." Thus, and thus alone, can the heart be set in the right relation to God.

Here it is in place to say a word about the Pauline use of the term "righteousness" or the "righteousness which is of God" (Phil. iii. 9). This is Paul's name for the right relationship with God which the Christian enjoys. Here, again, the modern mind finds the greatest difficulty in excluding from the thought of "righteousness" an ethical meaning. It is not for a moment to be denied that "righteousness" in Paul sometimes has an ethical meaning; certainly the relation to God that is so described is stultified if ethical results of the most profound nature do not follow. As we shall see in chapter xii., the Christian must walk worthily of his "vocation." That aspect however, belongs properly to the idea of sanctification. Can we make clearer to ourselves this "righteousness that is of God"? We shall certainly be misled if we seek to bring forward parallels from the Old Testament. The word in the Old Testament would require a treatise to itself, so bewildering are its variations of meaning. In the Old Testament "a word such as *righteousness* is like the sensitive tones of the human voice. Spoken in a desert, the voice is itself and nothing more; but utter it where the landscape is crowded with novel obstacles, and the original note is almost lost amid the echoes it startles. So with the righteousness of Jehovah; among the new associations in which the prophet affirms it, it starts novel repetitions of itself."<sup>1</sup> So far the "righteousness of Jehovah" in the Old Testament. Its meanings range from fidelity<sup>2</sup> to promise—whether the promise

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Smith, "Isaiah," II., p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> The sense of fidelity is found in Rom. iii. 3, 4.

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is given in the Covenant with the Chosen Nation, or is realised in Cyrus the pagan conqueror, "my servant" (Isaiah xlv. 13)—to efficiency and the power to prevail (Isaiah xlv. 23). "It is the quality in God, which divides His Godhead with His power, something intellectual as well as moral, the possession of a reasonable purpose as well as fidelity towards it."<sup>1</sup> It is quite true that, already in the Old Testament, the ideas of "righteousness" and "salvation" are frequently conjoined (e.g., Psalm xcvi. 2, and frequently in Isaiah xl.—lxvi.) "The righteousness of God is conceived as 'going forth,' as projected from the divine essence, and realising itself among men."<sup>2</sup> There can be little doubt that this conception of the divine righteousness as "going forth" among men, diffused among them as a divine purpose, cutting a clear straightforward path for itself through the mazes of history, lies behind Paul's use of the term. It is, however, misleading to see the same connection between "righteousness" and "justification" in Paul's language, as in the Old Testament. For example when in Isaiah xlv. 25, it is said that "in the Lord all the seed of Israel shall be *justified* and shall glory," the word simply means that Israel shall prevail "or be vindicated" while her enemies are "ashamed" (v. 24).

In Paul, the righteousness of God "justifies" men, not in the sense that they are "made righteous," but that they are accepted as "righteous." In other words they are brought into the only "right" relation to God. God's essential activity is shown in so acting towards them. This is a relationship of love, of sonship. To Paul, Christ's death on Calvary is the crowning exhibition of God's right-

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Smith, *ib.*, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Sanday and Headlam, "Romans," p. 35.

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eousness. The passage in Romans (iii. 23-26), which most clearly contains this idea may be thus translated:—

"All have sinned and fall short of God's approbation, but they are accepted as righteous for nothing by His grace through the liberation<sup>1</sup> which Jesus Christ brings. God set Him forth with a power of propitiation through faith in His blood, that He might demonstrate His righteousness; for God had passed by the sins of by-gone ages in His forbearance. He sought thus to demonstrate His righteousness in this present age that He might be righteous Himself and accept as righteous everyone who is really a believer in Jesus."

In this passage Paul is seen wrestling with the conception of "justification" which he is driven by controversial needs to employ. Evidently it is "freedom," "liberation" (*apolutrosis*) that is at the heart of his use of the term. The phrase "justified for nothing,"—"acquitted without trial," as it might be translated—would awaken deep surprise, and perhaps much moral resentment in the mind of a Jew. Only by provoking such a mood could Paul find entrance for his great idea of the religious freedom inseparably connected with the Christian salvation. Great emphasis ought to be placed on the words, "God set him forth." "Justification" costs the sinner nothing. This righteousness so demonstrated proceeds from the essential being of God Himself. It is the free expression of the "grace of God." The whole charge and cost is borne by God. It is He that provides the "propitiation," or rather gave to the world Jesus Christ "in His blood," *i.e.*, as a sacrifice, with a power of propitiation, which can

<sup>1</sup> Translating thus, instead of by "ransom." See Denney, "Expositor's Greek Testament," *in loco*.



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only become operative when it is received in faith. We can do no more with a gift than receive it. "Justification" here means that actually, in the experience of the sinner, he is set free from some peril. What that peril is, will be found in i. 17, 18. There "the righteousness of God" is revealed in the gospel "by faith and for faith," and is opposed to "the revelation of the wrath of God," *i.e.*, to the impending judgment.

What is meant by the word "propitiation"? It has a double meaning in English. It may signify either to "reconcile" or "to make reparation." Unfortunately, in ordinary religious speech, "propitiation" has come to have the latter meaning exclusively, which tends to mislead us in the interpretation of Paul's thought. There can be no doubt that the Death of Christ is always interpreted as a sacrifice, and that this sacrifice is intended to "demonstrate" God's righteousness. This involves two things. It means that it is necessary to show with unmistakable clearness, that this "righteousness" of God, or what corresponds to it now in Christian experience, does not imply that God either regards sin with indifference or can come to terms with it. It means also something more positive. The Cross is not merely the vindication of God's forbearance in past ages; it is the continuation and climax of the forbearance of God. The former forbearance of God is recognised for what it really is, in the propitiatory power of the crucified Christ. It is men who are thus propitiated or "reconciled." Paul says that God "made Him sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). "To become the righteousness of God" means that the whole personality of the Christian man is possessed and pervaded by the

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sense of the wondrous fact that he is "accepted as righteous," "justified for nothing." This is the "liberation" that has become ours through the Death of Jesus. Christ "was made sin, who knew no sin." As we have already seen above, the Death of Christ is conceived as a sacrifice. There were many kinds of sacrifices, and it is idle to ask which Paul means here. Whatever efficacy attached to Old Testament sacrifices was transferred without reflection to the Death of Jesus. Like sacrifice in general, it brings forgiveness of sin, but a forgiveness with a scope and a sweep undreamt of in the Old Testament. It is a forgiveness which is also "justification for nothing." Paul's thought, however, in the passage just quoted, is undoubtedly illuminated by the Hebrew habit of thought, which tended to identify the sin-offering with the sin, calling it "sin" (Lev. iv. 21-25; *hamartia* LXX). By a similar turn of thought in Gal. iii. 13, the person on whom the curse falls is identified with the curse itself. Christ may equally become our "righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30). In the same way the justified man may become "righteousness" (2 Cor. v. 21).

We must not press too hard, in favour of any theory of the atonement, the statement that God is the direct agent in making Christ "sin" or a "curse" for us. Cause and effect are often strangely intermingled and transposed in Jewish thought. God "hardened Pharaoh's heart." Isaiah is commanded to "make the heart of the people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes" (vi. 10). In John xii. 40, the agency in so doing is attributed to God. The actual results of Isaiah's preaching, and of Christ's mission are treated as part of the purpose of God. To the Jew, God's activity is everywhere, and in all things. He did

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not take refuge, as we do, under the shelter of the conception of cause and effect following one another in a series—a natural law. Satan, himself, in the Prologue, has to seek the Divine permission, ere he can torment Job. When we light upon utterances like this in 2 Cor. v. 21 we must always bear in mind that, for Paul, the heart that bore our sin on Calvary was the heart of God. There is no question of vicarious punishment. The idea is that of vicarious sacrifice. Vicarious sacrifice established itself in Jewish thought as a fact of human experience through the sufferings both of the nation, and of individuals as in Isaiah liii. The thought was the means of expression chosen by Jesus to utter His own conception of the Cross. Paul is ever deeply conscious of the divine cost of "justification." So great and wonderful is the Cross to him, that he flings out words to describe it as its light flashes upon him, now from one facet, now from another, as from a diamond. His language is largely determined by the circumstances in which he is speaking, and at each point his meaning must be historically determined. In the cases where he speaks of Christ crucified as "sin" or a "curse," the language is determined by a life-long controversy regarding the Law, and its abrogation.

The legal mind could not understand that any soul could be "accepted as righteous," unless after trial, and on conditions. Only thus could any sinner be "justified" or "acquitted." When Paul added that word "freely," "for nothing," he really imposed on "justification" an idea that had no logical connection with it. It is indeed the direct negation of its meaning as a forensic term. No man can really be "acquitted for nothing." Acquittal is either his due or not. He has a right to it, or he has none. Paul says that we have no

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right to it, and yet it is ours. Nothing can show more clearly how completely the meaning of law for the Christian life was shattered in Paul's consciousness, than the inability of this, its leading term, to carry the weight and content of the Christian gospel. This was the paradox in which Paul delighted. In Romans v. 12-19, Paul says that sin came on all men, without their co-operation, through Adam's transgression. Death, the penalty of sin, "reigned . . . even over them that had not sinned like Adam." By contrast, and yet in obedience to the same mysterious principle, "one man's act of redress issues in acquittal and life for all" (Moffatt). The "righteousness" was given to all as a free gift, through the death of Christ, without their personal act or deed. The only condition is that the gift be accepted in "faith;" and this faith does not include any moral judgment on our part that the requirements of strict justice have been observed. Rather the paradoxical position is that these have *not* been observed. Faith is simply a judgment, expressing itself in trust, that "sonship" is ours. We affirm in faith the reality of our experience. All merely legal relationship with God is at an end.<sup>1</sup> Therein consists the "folly" and the "scandal" of the Christian message. Moreover, we are led to see

<sup>1</sup> Paul's favourite expression for the relationship between God and man that corresponds to justification, is "peace with God." It has to be remembered that the idea would find an echo in Gentile as well as in Jewish religion. Roman religion, especially, laid much stress on the *jus divinum*, whose main object was to maintain the *pax deorum*, to secure the good-will of the gods by obtaining favourable auspices. Paul's message is that the good-will, the favour, the grace is already there, for faith—"Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we have our standing." (Rom. v., 1f). *cf.* W. Warde Fowler, "The Religious Experience of the Roman People," pp. 169ff. pp. 300ff.

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that "justification" is not the key to Paul's position. We must understand "faith," and experience it, before justification becomes either possible or intelligible. Faith is the subjective side of the gift of the "spirit." Sanctification, the work of the Spirit, not justification,—Christ in us, not Christ for us,—is the primary experience. Christians "begin" with the Spirit (Gal. iii. 3). With this experience we shall deal in the next chapter.

## XI

# SANCTIFICATION

### (I) THE RELIGIOUS IDEA

"To SANCTIFY" means, "to make holy," to "consecrate." Here again, as in the case of justification, the ethical conception is in the background. "Holy" in our religious speech, suggests moral character. In the New Testament it means a relationship to God, out of which character springs, as a stream from its source. Paul uses the word "holy" in the Old Testament sense. Christians are "sanctified," but how far this implies moral perfection, is seen from the fact that "saints" is the name given to all members of the Christian Church. "To the Church of God at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (I Cor. i. 2). We have only to recall the moral level of the church there, to understand that "saint" cannot mean what it means for us, one who has attained the highest level both of piety and of conduct. We shall best understand the word "sanctify," if we examine it: (1) in its religious aspect; (2) as an ethical idea. (1) will form the subject of the remainder of this chapter; (2) will be dealt with in the succeeding chapter on Ethics.

Take the meaning of the word "holy" as it meets us in all forms of primitive religion. The savage may have taken a liberty with a certain tree or other natural object. He may, for example, have cut it down, or defaced it, or even only



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sheltered under it. Certain consequences follow. He may suffer misfortune in health, or gear, or home. He comes to the conclusion, on the ground *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, that he has unwittingly "profaned," laid common hands upon, a "holy" place or object. It is "holy" in the sense that the god regards it as his peculiar property. The savage finds that a certain attitude and conduct towards such things and places are necessary if he is to continue to live in a condition of safety and security. A similar idea is found in the Old Testament. Jacob feels that he has unwittingly lain down in a "holy" place at Bethel. "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." Mount Sinai, where the Law was promulgated amid thunders and lightnings, might not be touched (Exodus xix. 12ff.), "lest the Lord break forth upon you." The opposite of "holy" is "profane," that which may be used in the ordinary way by men. The latter word originally signifies literally *pro fano*, the space in front of the temple or shrine, which may be trodden by any foot. The modern word comes to mean what it does, really owing to the content with which Christianity has filled the conception of God. All our life, all that we have is God's, and given us to be used in accordance with His will. The "profane," "secular" person is he who does not recognise responsibility of this kind, who allows his personality to be invaded by all kinds of influences indiscriminately.

Two things are apparent regarding this primitive sense of holiness. (1) That certain things, places, and persons are regarded as the property of the god. (2) That the meaning attaching to "holy" in the human mind and for human conduct depends on the character attributed to the god. What distinguishes the pagan "taboo" from the Christian

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conception of holiness is really determined by the difference between the pagan and the Christian conception of God. As the conception of God in the Old Testament became moralised, holiness began to take on a corresponding moral meaning, gaining in depth as the conception of God gained in moral content.

“Holiness” in the New Testament, as in the Old, when applied to human life, always retains the primitive meaning of “belonging to God,” only with a far richer and deeper content. The nation of Israel, largely through the teaching of the prophets, is regarded as in a special sense “holy,” chosen by God for a special purpose, in order to disseminate the knowledge of Himself throughout the world. Israel is conceived as having a special knowledge of God’s will, known as “the Law.” In this way it is marked off from other nations. In Jeremiah the notion of individuality first comes into prominence. The New Covenant is made, not with the nation, but with the individual. “I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” At the same time, Jeremiah lays more stress on inwardness, than on individuality. In the Old Testament thought generally, Israel is “My” people, not merely because Jehovah exercises a certain arbitrary and proprietary right towards them, but because He has, in His love, “redeemed” them, out of the land of Egypt. This is a thought which comes to full fruition only in the New Testament. After Jeremiah’s day, through the influence of the priestly caste, Jehovah’s service became more and more a matter of correct ritual, and observance of the Mosaic law. The result is the idea of a Holy God, afar off, whose Name dare not be mentioned,

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and who lives, more or less, in a state of moral neutrality towards men. The coming of Jesus realised in perfection Jeremiah's teaching about the individual. God is the Father, not merely of the nation, but of the individual, and re-asserts His claim on each individual soul by an act of redemption in Jesus Christ. "Ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23). New Testament holiness, therefore, is a state of belonging to God, which depends not on a mere divine fiat, or on proprietary right, but upon an act of salvation and redemption, executed at the greatest possible cost to the Father. The human recognition and acceptance of this fact is *faith*. There are no degrees of holiness in the Christian conception. All Christians are holy by divine choice or "election," and there can be no degrees either in the divine offer, or in the human acceptance of salvation.

In Paul's view, the coming of the Spirit into the hearts of men "sanctifies" them. Each professing Christian is a "saint." It is important, however, to notice that the word is never used in the singular, except in Phil. iv. 21, which is no real exception. This is an indication of the place that the Church has in the thought and conception of the Christian life in the New Testament. The Christian is never regarded as chosen, "sanctified," for himself alone, in order, as Luther once said, "to sit down and enjoy God all by himself in a corner." "Sanctification" implies social responsibilities, and must issue in ethical results and spiritual attainments, which are to be employed for the "edifying" of all. The "Spirit," which, in experience, is the same as the indwelling Christ, is the possession of the Christian Church, and thus becomes the possession of the individual. We have already seen how Paul interpreted the gift

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of the Spirit, not as issuing merely in certain ecstatic phenomena, and in the exercise of miraculous powers, but in the manifestation of everyday morality, the ordinary gifts and graces of the Christian life.<sup>1</sup>

The experience of "sanctification," of belonging to the God and Father of Jesus Christ by redemption, was Paul's own fundamental experience. It was precisely what he himself had been striving to obtain in his pre-Christian days, by doing the works of the law. Now, instead of obtaining it, he received it as a free gift. He received it by faith. He means ultimately by "sanctification" precisely the same as he means by "justification." It is the spirit of God that sanctifies. Sanctification for the individual issues in the sense of "sonship," "adoption." We belong to God now as Christians, as the child belongs to the father. The foundation of that relationship is not mere proprietary right, but love, carrying with it corresponding duties. "I am thine, and thou art mine" is the language not of a commercial transaction, but of love. Thus the ancient and primitive idea of holiness persists. Without it Paul's doctrine of the Spirit is unintelligible, and tends to be regarded as implying that the "Spirit" is simply a vague influence of God. The relationship in sanctification is personal. The message of Ananias to Paul at Damascus is that God has "chosen" or "elected" him for service among the Gentiles. Not only does "sanctification" mean for Paul himself "peace" with God, as a child is at peace in his father's love; it also means the conviction that his mission and message and peculiar experience are for the Gentile world. It could not be otherwise, inasmuch as there is no question of merit or privilege. The language of 2 Tim. ii. 23 exactly expresses

<sup>1</sup> p. 235f.

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the Pauline view of service. The Christian man is "sanctified and meet for the Master's use, set apart for all kinds of good work." It is also this sense of possession by God that gives rise to the triumphant conviction that "nothing can separate us from the love of God" (Romans viii. 35). Of course all depends on our idea of the God to whom we belong. For Paul, God was supremely One who bestowed on men His gracious favour, at the cost to Himself of His Son's death, and without waiting for men to be worthy of it.

This thought is more clearly expressed in the idea of justification; but it equally underlies the notion of sanctification as well. "Sanctification" as a religious idea, primarily expresses an act of God; hence it is the Holy Spirit that sanctifies. It also expresses a "state," a standing before God into which we are brought, through the work of Jesus Christ. It is impossible really to separate the ideas of justification and sanctification. Hence much that is said of justification holds true of sanctification as well. The words of Romans v. 1-2, might be a description of the state of sanctification also. "Jesus Christ," says Paul, "has given us access<sup>1</sup> into this state of grace in which we have our standing."<sup>2</sup> We may now proceed to develop the conception of sanctification as the ultimate source of Christian conduct.

<sup>1</sup> A somewhat majestic word.

<sup>2</sup> The perfect tense is used in the Greek.

## XII

### SANCTIFICATION

#### (2) THE PAULINE ETHIC

THIS condition of "holiness" demands on our part both faith and conduct. Indeed faith *is* conduct. The sanctified man not only ought to be moral; he *is* moral. A certain walk and "conversation" are demanded of us if we are to maintain the new friendship with God. "Our citizenship is in heaven," and carries with it all the obligations and sacrifices that the mother-country lays upon us. "Heaven" for Paul is the new world-order, the rule or kingdom of God, into which we are translated. The risen Christ is the ruler of that new world-order. The kingdom is the kingdom of the Son of His love. It is important to note that moral progress is not a growth into holiness, but a growth *in* holiness. There is strictly speaking no progressive sanctification, and holiness, unlike the pagan conception, admits of no degrees. That would be to negative the fundamental idea of the Christian gospel. The gracious act that makes us holy is a divine act, done once and for all.

In this act of sanctification God has already exerted all His power; the development of the Christian character is but the unfolding of power already within the reach of the individual saint. We are intended to become what we are. This is the message of Christ's Life and Resurrection. We are reconciled to God through the Death of His



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Son, and, being reconciled, are saved by His Life (Romans v. 11). What is sometimes understood as "progressive" sanctification, really means that the message of the Gospel needs to be daily heard by us, and daily acted upon. "Our chief business with Christianity," said Chalmers, "is to proceed upon it." This is what Paul means when he says, "The God of peace sanctify you through and through, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept in complete harmony,<sup>1</sup> so as to be without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is true to His word, and will do this" (1 Thess. v. 23).

The analogy with patriotism is by no means out of place. It is really out of Jewish religious patriotism that the mould is taken, in which the idea of sanctification is cast. Patriotism, our duty to the divine institution of the State, is a social and political condition of the individual's life, in whose creation, strictly speaking, the individual has no share. It carries with it, however, certain important duties and obligations. We are called on to render unto God the things that are God's and unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. This is no recommendation of political neutrality, but an implicit condemnation of it. Paul shares this view strongly. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans xiii. 1-7). It is, however, a mistake to regard Paul as a Roman imperialist. His view of the impending end of the world renders this impossible.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, as we are born members of a certain family, citizens of a particular state, or occupants

<sup>1</sup> The breaches of harmony produced among the Thessalonians by vice, indolence, impatience of one another's defects, retaliation, etc., are referred to. In contrast with this, God is the God of "peace."

<sup>2</sup> P. 31.

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of a certain social position, as Christians we are born in Christian baptism,<sup>†</sup> into an obedience to the rule or kingdom of God, and into a responsibility for the corresponding social duties which ought to be maintained between man and man. The Christian lives in a new world of values, where there stands out sharply a distinction between things permanent and things transient, things seen and things unseen; where the humblest and most despised individual can claim a new loving interest as one for whom Christ died. The slave relationship belongs to the things that are not permanent, because the present world-order is not permanent. That is probably the chief reason why Paul accepts it without comment. In the progress of Christian thought, as the Second Coming of Jesus receded further away, and was translated into the conception that His kingdom is beginning to be realised amid the social conditions of the present, the judgment about the transience, for example, of the slave-relationship persisted and justified itself. It resulted in its abolition. This is, however, not one of the moral questions that presented itself to Paul's mind, although he built greater than he knew.

The significance of the Pauline ethic is not found in the things he approved or disapproved, but in the great new moral principle which he set free, in obedience to his insight into the meaning of that for which the Life, and especially the Death of Christ stood. Paul was the first Christian to disentangle all the issues of the great new principle that religion is itself morality. Morality in the Old Testament is the doing of the will of God; only the will of God, for the Pharisee, had become hardened into an elaborate system of precepts, the Law, in which

<sup>†</sup> See p. 253f.

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religion itself took its place as a statutory precept.<sup>1</sup> The central feature of Old Testament morality, up to the very end, is undoubtedly its religious character. The important thing to note is that the New Testament preachers went forth, not as preachers of morality, but to proclaim a gospel which involved duties. In the Gentile world around him, Paul found the connection between religion and morality a loose one.<sup>2</sup> Paul caught up the broken link from the religious, and not from the ethical side. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit." The issue is not so much between good and bad, as between life and death. The "Spirit" is the love of God, revealed in the Cross of Christ. "The great contrast is for him not as with the Stoics, between the universal law of Nature and those who rebel against it; not as with Lucretius, between the blind victims of *religio* and the indefatigable student of the *rerum natura*; not as in the *Æneid*, between the man who bows to the decrees of fate, destiny, God, or whatever we choose to call it, and the wilful rebel, victim of his own passions; not as in the Roman state and family, between the man who performs religious duties and the man who wilfully neglects them—between *pious* and *impious*; but between the universal law of love, focussed and concentrated in the love of Christ, and the sleep, the darkness, the death of a world that will not recognise it."<sup>3</sup> The moral life is itself a spiritual ritual, "a divine service" (Romans xii. 1). In the maintenance of this moral life, prayer, and especially prayer that the Christian may realise the love of God in Christ towards himself, has the

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 175ff.

<sup>2</sup> W. Warde Fowler, "The Religious Experience of the Roman People," p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 467.

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principal rôle. This is the secret of the overwhelming place which thanksgiving and joy take in the prayers of Paul. He ever feels himself "translated" into a kingdom, a moral order of love and forgiveness, where moral effort is free, no longer hopeless and despairing.

We are now able to appreciate the supreme issue of sanctification for the individual believer. That supreme issue is complete moral and religious freedom, the "Abba, Father," and the deliverance from legal enactment. This freedom is apparent:—

1. *In connection with natural things.* "Man is only truly at home in God's world when God has become his Father, so that he has no fear of any creature" (Beyschlag, "New Testament Theology," II., 211). "All things are yours" (1 Cor. iii. 22). Nothing is evil in itself, and all that God has made may be made capable of innocent use (Romans xiv. 14; 1 Cor. x. 25). The only restriction is within the perfect law of freedom, expressing itself as brotherly love. We must use nothing so as to bring again into bondage those who are weaker brethren (1 Cor. x. 23 ff.).

2. *It is also freedom from statutory morality.* The Christian is no longer under bondage to a Law that expresses itself in "letter." The profound sense of inability to keep the Mosaic law was for Paul the occasion of a discovery that had very wide-reaching effects. He was made aware of another "law" warring in his members against the Law of God. "The Law imparts a consciousness of sin." "Sin having received an opportunity, through my being brought face to face with the obligations of the Law, seized it in order to produce in me every kind of evil desire; for apart from the Law, sin, in my experience, was quiescent and lifeless."

It is this discovery of an evil principle or "author-

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ity" within him, in his "flesh," that accounts for the apparent ambiguity with which "law" is spoken of in Romans. Sometimes it seems to mean the Mosaic law; sometimes statutory morality in general; sometimes conscience applying to the case of Gentiles as well (Romans ii. 14); sometimes the evil impulse,—“the law of sin and death”—within him. If we translate in some cases by “authority,” we shall see his meaning more clearly. “Salvation” for Paul meant complete deliverance from statutory religion, either ceremonial or moral. He is now subject only to the “constraint” of Christ’s love (2 Cor. v. 14). “The authority of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the authority of sin and death.” He owns another Master, belongs as “sanctified” to another moral order. The spirit that sanctifies is shed abroad in our hearts, and we cry, “Abba, Father.” Not even statutes promulgated by God are any longer a way to righteousness. We may note that in the passage just quoted “law” is used in the most general sense. “The Mosaic law is only one of the most important instances which come under this description; and it, with all statutory conceptions of religion, ends when Christ appears.”<sup>1</sup> The conquest obtained by Christ over the power of sin in the “flesh” renders nugatory any efforts of law in the same direction. The Christian’s law or “authority” he carries no longer outside himself as a letter that killeth, but inwardly, as a living spiritual relationship, sonship before God. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

3. Christian freedom also involves a capacity for *moral and intellectual originality*. The Christian possesses a new will. He “walks” not according

<sup>1</sup> J. Denney, “Expositor’s Greek Testament,” II., 669.

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to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (Romans viii. 4). He lives "to the Lord." The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit awakens a responsive love to Him. Love knows no tasks, only duties, done *con amore*. Paul is under no delusions as to the necessity for strenuous moral effort. Those to whom he speaks were liable because of their past history to libertinism. He, therefore, has constantly in view the grosser sins. "Set free from sin, ye have become slaves of righteousness." The "members" are to be yielded up to the service of righteousness. The result is that complete "sanctification" spoken of previously. So to yield up the "members" is a recognition that they belong to God, and to His service. The moral effort is undertaken in a very different atmosphere from that which legalism produces. There is no sense of despairing doom, or hopeless conviction that either past weakness or a bad conscience are prophecies of failure.

Moreover, this freedom is also intellectual. The Christian possesses the capacity of understanding divine things, and no longer is in bondage to natural forces which he cannot understand. "He that is spiritual can come to a conclusion about everything" (I Cor. ii. 15). He is called, in the words of Jesus, "no longer a slave but a friend." Paul draws a sharp distinction between the "natural" and the "spiritual" man. The "natural" (*ψυχικός*), never gets beyond the region of sense; the "spiritual" (*πνευματικός*), has light on the highest and deepest questions of existence. "What no eye has ever seen, what no ear has ever heard, what never entered the mind of man, God has prepared all that for those who love him" (I Cor. ii. 9, Moffatt). He understands God's "secret purpose" or "mystery."



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In this connection it ought to be noted that Paul is here in complete harmony with the moral teaching of Jesus. Freedom, creativeness, originality, are the marks of that teaching, and they are the marks of all true *Imitatio Christi*. There is such a thing as an *Imitatio Christi* which makes even His verbal precepts a legal code, and His literal example a moral bondage.<sup>1</sup> The Christian "imitation" is a standard that may easily mislead, unless we have made some progress in moral discernment. Jesus came, primarily, neither to teach nor to preach, but that there might be a gospel to preach and a standard of conduct to follow. The actual path Jesus followed was determined by His peculiar vocation. The vocation was first; the path a means of fulfilling it. Some plain human duties such as earning a living, or family and civic responsibilities, and some lawful recreations, did not enter into His life. His engrossing business was the redemption of mankind.<sup>2</sup> "Why judge ye not of yourselves," said Jesus, "what is right?"

In a work by the Japanese artist, Yoshio Markino, the following sentences occur:—

"Don't imitate my art, don't watch my hand or brush. Only feel what I am feeling. Communicate your spirits to the nature and find out everything yourselves. Judge your art with your own eyes, and judge your music with your ears."<sup>3</sup> The expression is at times quaint, but the words are true not only of art, but supremely true of Christian ethics. They represent precisely the kind of moral discipline that Jesus employed with His disciples, and in this regard Paul has literally caught the spirit of his Master. Paul several

<sup>1</sup> J. Denney, "Studies in Theology," pp. 170ff.

<sup>2</sup> cf. W. M. Macgregor, "Christian Freedom," p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> "When I was a Child," p. 253.

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times exhorts his converts to "imitate Christ," but it is remarkable that when he brings forward the action of Jesus as an ethical example, it is the Incarnation that he adduces (Phil. ii. 1-10; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Romans xv. 3, 7). No *slavish* imitation can therefore be meant, but an imitation of spirit. "Let that mind be in you." Had Paul slavishly imitated Jesus, there would have been no gospel of freedom from law.

In one important instance Paul strikes out a course of conduct for himself. Not even yet have we properly grasped the extraordinary daring of the conception of Christian freedom developed by Paul, largely as the result of his own experience of legalistic morality. There is no word in the recorded teaching of Jesus that can be construed into the position that the Mosaic law was temporary.<sup>1</sup> He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. Certain single precepts, indeed, He has filled so full of moral content and obligation in the Sermon on the Mount, that they cease to have the character of precepts that can be applied to actual life without the co-operation of the human intelligence, as, for example, the precept, "Resist not evil." Yet nowhere can Jesus be said to have *abrogated* the Mosaic law. This, on the other hand, is the pivot of Paul's whole position. The liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, is not only a religious, but an ethical liberty; not merely the removal of guilt, but the setting free of the mind and will. Only one who knew what Christian sanctification is, and what moral energy resides in it, could have been bold enough to preach it. It is neither more nor

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that in Matt. xxiii. 23, Jesus does not censure the Pharisees for tithing, but for emphasising this, to the exclusion of justice, mercy, and faithfulness. "These latter ye ought to have done, without leaving the former undone." (cf. Matt. viii. 4).

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less than the ideal doctrine that all legal statutes are out of place in the Christian life. Our norm is neither the teaching nor the example of Jesus by themselves, but the experience of His work and of His risen life, His Spirit. As Christians, we have as much freedom to examine the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, as to examine any of the ethical passages in Paul's writings or John's. The precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are put in such a way that they challenge examination and provoke thought. Christ does not do for men what they can do for themselves, *viz.*, apply them. Our obedience is determined not by statutory authority, but by communion with the living mind of Him who uttered them. Our ultimate guide is a divinely illumined conscience, a divinely sanctified will, and a loving heart. The illumination is no mere isolated inner light. Christ dwelling in His Church, and therefore in us, has a right to be His own Commentator and Interpreter, both in doctrine and in morality. Paul recognises the custom of the Church as a guide to morality (1 Cor. xi. 16; xiv. 36; 1 Thess. ii. 14). The sanctified man, who understands that the God who will not let him go is love, holiness, and justice, and who recognises that he is a citizen of a new moral order, will know when to draw the sword, and when to turn the other cheek. He, living as he does still in a lower moral order, the life of the flesh, is, for example, debarred from turning other people's cheeks, or from giving away other people's coats, in pursuance of a legalistic or literal interpretation even of Jesus' words. Precepts or principles by themselves, cut off from the spiritual sources in which they rise, are as flowers broken off at the root. "Precepts wither if they are alone" (Seneca, Ep. xcv. 59).

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This is clearly dangerous doctrine. All great doctrines are dangerous. Even the Gospel of grace is dangerous, as Paul found. Freewill, by the teaching of Scripture, was a dangerous experiment. All passions are dangerous; "He that is angry with his brother<sup>1</sup> is in danger of the judgment." The determining of the point in the Christian Gospel where it evaporates in sentimentality; or in Christian morality, where it explodes in anarchy or hardens into legalism, is a matter of the gravest moral moment. The conditions of the social atmosphere, the stage of communal morality that has been reached, have all to be taken into account. It is not surprising that Paul's great principle of Christian freedom should have occasioned abuse among the weak, and have excited grave doubts in the minds of the morally earnest. The existence of abuse is suggested in the questions. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" "Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?" (Romans vi. 1, 15). The fact also, that the questions are obvious quotations from the language of opponents, suggests that Paul is developing his doctrine of sanctification in Romans vi., in opposition to some who were seriously concerned about the interests of morality. It is impossible to escape the impression that the return of the Galatians to the observance of "days, months, seasons, years," was really moral earnestness playing for safety; equally with Festus, they may have regarded Paul's teaching as madness.

It is interesting to note the lines of Paul's reply. The morally lax and the morally earnest may

<sup>1</sup> In these words we omit "without a cause," an insertion which misses the meaning. All anger is not forbidden: but the passion has elements of grave moral danger in it.

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both alike become the means of reducing Christianity to bondage.

1. Note how *Paul refuses to think in terms of abstractions, or mere forces*. His opponents talk of "sin" and "grace," as though they were impersonal principles. To Paul "sin" is a personal power, the arch-demon in the hierarchy of evil powers. "Grace" is the grace of Jesus Christ. It is, indeed, the Lord Himself, the Spirit.

Christian experience does not rest on mere feeling, or upon the influence of a new powerful principle in the life, acting like an impersonal force, even if derived from a Person, Jesus Christ. It is itself through and through a personal relationship, an exchange of loyalties. "Even so reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Two main aspects of the ethical motive are prominent—gratitude, and an enriched form of *noblesse oblige*. So far as the Christian is regarded as a citizen of another "aeon"—of "heaven"—his *noblesse* carries with it duties and a sense of honour. Paul urges the Thessalonians to "lead a life worthy of God who called you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. ii. 12). The same thought is present in Phil. iii. 20, "our citizenship is in heaven." Paul, the Roman citizen, is conscious of the privilege conferred on him by his citizenship, throughout the world. He applies the thought to citizenship of the heavenly kingdom. The "kingdom," however, is usually merged in the person of Jesus, who absorbs all his interest. On Him all depends, and in Him all his hope is founded. Accordingly the ethical motive is far more often described as *gratitude*. The Christian life is a free response in obedience to a variety of motives created by the central facts of the Gospel itself. God has given us His Spirit out of

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pure magnanimity, and not because of our desert. He has granted us redemption and reconciliation. In Romans xii. 1, immediately following a description in the previous chapter, of the fathomless "wealth" of God which is ours, Paul urges the consecration of the body in pure living. The moral life is conceived as an act of grateful worship, "a spiritual rite."<sup>1</sup>

Paul, therefore, in seeking to meet antinomian tendencies by emphasising the personal relationship between the believer and Christ, both conserves freedom, and discovers a source and sanction of moral energy that does not overbear the personality. To Jesus we stand in deepest indebtedness for pardon and life, and in His fellowship we are raised to high rank and high responsibility. To be "in Christ" is simply to be a Christian. Forgiveness is still needed and sought for unwilling obedience to an evil power, that has now no dominion or "authority" over us; but not in that direction any longer does our loyalty or inclination lie. "Law" is God speaking in an authoritative voice, of which the Mosaic law is the most striking embodiment. For the Christian, ideally, external law is done away altogether. Obedience arises from a sense of supreme indebtedness to the God and Father of Jesus Christ. We are still servants of God, but our reward cannot be called "wages." It is a "free gift" (Romans vi. 23).

2. Paul further develops his doctrine of sanctification in opposition to the anarchy of moral laxity, and the legalism of moral earnestness, by everywhere emphasising *the need of strenuous moral*

<sup>1</sup> This is the correct translation of the Greek words rendered "reasonable service" (A.V.). They represent, as there is good reason to believe, a technical expression in Hellenistic religion. (Reitzenstein, "Die Hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen." p. 155.)



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*effort on our part.* The most striking passage in this connection is Phil. ii. 12. "Work at your own salvation with reverence and trembling, for it is God who in His goodwill enables you to will this and to achieve it" (Moffatt).

In what does the effort primarily consist? It is in what might be called, on our part, *a persistent daily re-affirmation of the act of consecration.* How close Paul is to the daily experience of his converts is shown in his constant expression of this principle in terms suitable to those who were surrounded by a public opinion, which tolerated the grosser sins, and thereby rendered Christians all the more liable to these kinds of temptation. "Present your members as servants of righteousness unto sanctification" (Rom. vi. 19). We shall misunderstand the meaning of "unto sanctification" unless we remember that Paul is not really expressing his thought in abstract nouns like "righteousness," or "sanctification." "Sanctification" here is virtually a semi-personification. It is the timeless act of God, which is gradually realised in time in the growing Christian experience of it. There is a moment when we are "wholly" sanctified. Men, however, must co-operate by renewed acts of self-consecration.

Paul knows no doctrines that cannot be translated in terms of moral energy. "Sanctification" is really an inclusive term that contains implicitly within itself everything that Paul means by those particular relationships to God into which we are brought, and which are expressed by terms like "justification," "adoption," "redemption." Faith is the human side of the relationship; faith, too, "energises" through love (Gal. v. 6). "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by all the mercy that God has shewn you in Jesus Christ, present your whole personality as a sacrifice to Him, living,

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holy, and well-pleasing in His sight. This is the only kind of spiritual rite suitable for you" (Romans xii. 1). The Spirit of God, in its ideal action, does not decide moral questions for us, or lay down a course of procedure; it lifts us into a region where there is a solemn sense of responsibility in decision, and the sanctified moral instinct has full and free play.

Two criticisms of the Pauline ethic may be noted in conclusion.

1. Paul has been called "narrow." He is sometimes accused of indifference to all that we mean by culture. The truth really is that Paul's religious principle is the only one on which a broad culture is possible. What he says about the "wisdom of the world" must be interpreted historically. The Græco-Roman religious spirit affected to despise the flesh, "as the tomb of the soul." Paul, in his doctrine of "entire sanctification," preserved for the Church the true Christian conception that the Cross of Christ, the Christian religion, lays a claim on all our faculties. The Incarnation itself is a symbol of the fact. No doubt the higher phases of culture—science, art, literature—do not fall within the horizon of the apostle. Like Jesus Himself, he is too well aware that the moment is one of religious crisis, and that the time is short. He says some very hard things about the "wisdom of this world." Here, also, we must remember that Paul is thinking of that "wisdom," chiefly in so far as it greeted the Gospel of the Cross. There is a place for this attitude even to-day. Many clever men, and many systems of thought still insist on approaching Jesus Christ simply as a phenomenon to be included under one category of thought or another. How many "wise" men, especially those who are beginning to be wise, regard Christianity

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as a dogmatic system, a parcel of beliefs, of which the Church is the custodian? The important thing to note about any religious system, is neither the narrowness nor the breadth of culture in those who adhere to it; but whether, on its fundamental principles, all higher culture must be neglected. Christianity as preached by Paul is not of this type. It gives us a title to the amplest inheritance, provided it be used in the spirit of Christ, and in the service of man. "All things are yours," says Paul, "and ye are Christ's." "Whatsoever things are true, worthy, just, attractive, high-toned, all excellence, all merit, these are the things to which you must apply your mind" (Phil. iv. 8). Paul is indeed one-sided. One-sidedness is characteristic of the man; "this one thing I do." He is not narrow. It was the conviction of the timeless reality of what God had done for him in Jesus Christ, and the sense that what He had done for him He was waiting to do for all men, no timorous solicitude for the contents of the Christian faith, that wrung from him the defiant words: "Though I, or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which I preached unto you, let him be anathema." They are actuated by a passion for freedom, moral and intellectual. There is an intellectual as well as a moral legalistic temper, a bondage to the tyranny of natural law, and to the tradition of observed fact, which creates for many a point of view from which Jesus Christ is invisible. Paul, more than any other, has secured for men, in Bengel's phrase, a *via maxime vialis*, a way that all may tread, and in which even men incapable by temperament of great emotional disturbance, or lacking in intellectual endowment, may walk secure. It is a way of holiness, and wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. "With

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all his heart Paul believed in the power of the common man, when touched by the power of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

2. A second criticism directed against Paul's ethical system is that while, at one door, he expels the Law as an ethical sanction, he admits it at another; that he is not consistent in his theory that everything statutory is banished from the Christian religion; that his letters are full of ethical principles laid down as laws to be obeyed. He can speak of those who were formerly "slaves of sin," as now "slaves of righteousness;" and so there arises a new and contradictory negation of moral freedom. It is claimed that Paul never completely emancipated himself from the old Jewish ideas of reward and legal righteousness. To quote Weinel, "In the Epistle to the Galatians we have both lines of thought side by side. First, the new, the Christian, wonderfully distinct; 'If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit also let us walk' (Gal. v. 25). Then the old, 'He that sows to the flesh, shall from the flesh in the course of nature reap corruption; he that sows to the Spirit, shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.' Paul did not perceive that his religious systems jostle one another—the Jewish religion of rewards and a legal righteousness, and the new religion of redemption and of the Spirit."<sup>2</sup> The inference in this case seems to be that Paul has not gone far enough in making use of the doctrine of the free grace of God. Weinel goes on to make the astounding statement that "unlike Luther, St. Paul has not made use in this connection of the motive of gratitude to God who has done such great things for His children." A statement like that refutes itself. Paul, with all his idealising of his converts is perfectly well aware of the stage of morality at which

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Macgregor, "Christian Freedom," p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> "St. Paul, The Man and His Work," p. 342.

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they have arrived. They are still "carnal" (1 Cor. iii. 3). He is also well aware that, as in the case of all missionaries, his converts will look to his own life as a pattern. Once or twice, he says, "Imitate me." Is he, therefore, as a Christian man—knowing well that "sanctification" means moral effort, and "liberty" does not mean licence—to be prevented from giving practical illustrations of Christian morality as he does in Romans xii., and from stating plainly what he does mean by Christian conduct? Is the motive of reward to be excluded from Christian morality, when the reward is regarded as coming from the hand of a Saviour? There is no single one of Paul's precepts that can be shown to be incapable of deduction from the doctrine of the free grace of God. All of them are summed up, as Christ's were, in the law of love; and love can use what external authority it possesses without self-contradiction. Even God uses force as well as "free grace." There is such a thing in the Christian life as plain duty; it is good for us all to be reminded of it.

It may, however, be conceded that Paul in some of his daring statements of Christian moral freedom, failed to recognise that he spoke to "babes in Christ." The idea that "law" is only of temporary validity holds good at all times; but we live in the temporal, not wholly in the eternal. Perhaps also, he fails always to distinguish between ceremonial and moral law. Paul never sharply distinguishes the ethical and the religious. In his recoil from legalism, it may be that he over-emphasises the religious, and underestimates the difficulty that men have in living without disciplinary rules. There are moments when we must all ascend "the bare staircase of duty;" it is the only path that is plain. At the same time, a criticism like that

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of Weinel's forgets the source of Paul's apparent inconsistency and its real nature. Paul's missionary duty consisted not only in preaching, but in moral training. All around those to whom he speaks are voices and influences calling them back to the old bad life. Moreover, Paul's moral precepts are not set down in handbook form. Behind them is felt his passionate exhortation and pleading, the power of his own personality. He can say, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free." He can also say, "Use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh."

"Christ," he says, "is an end of law for everyone who believes, so far as law was meant to produce righteousness of living"<sup>1</sup> (Romans x. 4). The same idea is expressed in the striking and beautiful use which he makes of the Rabbinical legend of the veil on the face of Moses after Sinai. "That veil," says Paul, "remains to this day. It still rests on the people's heart. The fact is veiled from them that the glory fades not into the light of common day, as in Moses' case, but into Christ" (2 Cor. iii. 14ff.).<sup>2</sup> "The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The goal of human character is the "glory" of Jesus. "Glory" is the kind of life with God He now lives, the coming Judge of all, victorious over every evil power, free to exercise His sway of love and grace in every direction, for our advantage. Ours, too, is that glory. The goal cannot be reached by obedience to external commandments; only by inward transformation. "We all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from one

<sup>1</sup> In order to translate fully all that is implied in "unto righteousness."

<sup>2</sup> See Moffatt's translation.



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glory to another. This is the doing of the Lord, the Spirit." This, then, is what Paul means by moral liberty. Character or "glory" is the product, not of transliteration, but of transformation. It is not only liberty from condemnation, or from the yoke of the Mosaic law. It is freedom from all that is in its nature statutory, "liberty to organise the new life, and to legislate for it from within."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cf. J. Denney, 2 Cor. "Expositor's Bible" p. 136.

## XIII

# IMMORTALITY

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF S. PAUL TO THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

It is a commonplace in connection with the subject of Immortality, that the idea of survival after death is not due to Christianity. It is a natural instinct. It had its place in the non-Christian religions; even the Buddhist doctrine of personal annihilation through growth and absorption into the Universe, is the recognition of an instinct which had laboriously to be destroyed. The materialistic view that life is the product of physical processes, which ceases when they cease, is to-day, not only scientifically incredible, but represents the greatest act of high-handed violence that has ever been done to human nature as God made it. The problem of Christian immortality does not turn on this question at all.

Judaism, in its later developments, had evolved a doctrine of the resurrection of the individual (Daniel xii. 2, 3). The doctrine was an accepted tenet of Pharisaism, and was important enough to form one of the chief points of division with the Sadducees. The principle underlying the Jewish belief was that the relationship between God and the individual believer could never end. The believer was God's possession, "His holy one" (Psalm xvi. 10). "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy

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counsel, and afterward receive me to glory " (Psalm lxxiii. 23-24). In the Old Testament there is also another ground on which the hope of immortality is founded—the demand made by the conscience of the man who suffers, for vindication in another life (Job xix. 25).<sup>1</sup>

As regards the teaching of Jesus, the assurance of Immortality is included in that faith and trust in the Fatherhood of God which He came to declare. Only once or twice in His recorded teaching does He give explicit utterance to His thoughts on this subject. Confronted with an insincere Sadducaic quibble—one of the puzzling questions that popular Sadducaism used to put to popular Pharisaism (Mark xii. 18-27 *and parallels*)—He makes appeal to first principles. The resurrection life is on another plane than the present. "They neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels in heaven." These words must be regarded in the light of the sensuous interpretations of the future life that prevailed in some Rabbinical circles,<sup>2</sup> and do not warrant the chilling sense that is sometimes put upon them. Jesus does not doom to extinction the purest and noblest of human relationships. Moreover the divine purpose and solicitude for the individual life is contradicted by a grave from which there is no escape. "God is not a god of dead men, but of living."

The real significance of the teaching and Person of Jesus in this connection is (I) that *He fills with new content the life of immortality*. It is not on the duration, but on the quality of the eternal life that He lays stress. This is also the nature of the Jewish contribution to the doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> "Where "Redeemer" = "Vindicator." cf G. A. Smith, "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament," pp. 206-7.

<sup>2</sup> But see p. 196.

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Jesus has given new and eternal meaning to the present life, by His revelation of God as the Father. He has, thereby, given a new content to the future life. He tells us nothing about Heaven as a place. He tells us everything about the kind of life that is there lived. It is a life of communion with God through Himself. "Where I am, there shall ye be also." The future kingdom is also present, within us. The influences and qualities of the immortal life permeate even the present. He has fully recognised and vindicated the longing of the human heart to find utterance in eternity—no longer under the menace and dishonour of sin and death—for the noblest emotions, the purest activities, and the hard-won intellectual achievements of our life on earth. "He came that we might have life, and might have it to the full (John x. 10)."

(2) *Jesus first made it plain that Eternal Life is for all.* This necessarily follows from His doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. Here and there in Judaism before Christ came, men thought of God as Father, but the truth had never before been the experience of all who had faith to believe it. Similarly with Eternal Life. Even to the end, in Jewish thought, immortality remained the prerogative chiefly of the patriarchs, the martyrs, and the heroes of the faith. God is "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Eternal life is the reward of those who, like them, were pre-eminently righteous, and performed great exploits of faith. What we might call the *democratisation* of immortality is effectively performed in the reply that Jesus gives to the Sadducaic quibblers. It is so calmly and easily done—like the utterance of all His greatest words—that we almost lose sight of what has happened. He quotes the saying of God to Moses at the bush, and quietly deduces from it that God's eternal relation-

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ship to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the same for all, even those whose names are not written on the roll of national heroes. "God is not a God of dead people, but of the living." "Ye therefore do greatly err."<sup>1</sup>

These heroic figures were connected with the great redemption promised in the Messianic age. They would naturally be remembered in the national restoration. It was probably some difficulty of this kind that led the primitive Church to lay such stress upon the immediate return of Jesus to inaugurate the new Kingdom, and to feel such disquiet at the thought of dying before He came. God would undoubtedly invade Sheol on behalf of these great ones, and raise them up from the dead; would He do so for the greater number of nameless believers who had died? "We that are alive," says Paul, "shall in no way take precedence of them that are asleep" (1 Thess. iv. 17). "The dead in Christ shall rise first" (verse 16). A sense of peculiar privilege attached in Jewish thought to those who were alive at the advent of the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Paul further expanded this thought in his doctrine of the free grace of God. God's gifts are not granted on any basis of human merit or descent. Faith alone entitles his humblest descendants to the privileges of Abraham, their father. Again Paul's pre-Christian experience speaks. For a tender conscience like his, with the weight and guilt upon it of constant moral failure, the expectation of sharing in the Messianic hope must have been mingled with a personal fear and a gloomy foreboding, lest he himself should be a castaway.

Convincing proof can be brought to bear, in order to show that the life and teaching of Jesus of

<sup>1</sup> Mk. xii. 27. Similarly when He says of Zacchæus, "He also is a son of Abraham." In God's sight he has birth and breeding in his blood. This in opposition to the Pharisaic religious aristocrats.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Dan. xii. 12.

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Nazareth were not unknown to Paul. At the same time, these two aspects of the doctrine of immortality, the qualitative and the democratic so impressively stated in the teaching of Jesus, came to him wrapt up in his conversion experience. The "glory" that was there displayed defines for him the quality of the life to come; the love that was manifested to the "chief of sinners" was sufficient guarantee that all were intended to share it. These two great ideas Paul develops in his own way. He received them "from the Lord." At the same time, he makes a real personal contribution to the Christian doctrine of immortality. He tempers neither the severity nor the goodness of the Christian message about Eternal Life, but thinks it out in his own way. He leaves much unsaid that we would like him to say. His doctrine is at times very obscure. There may have been shiftings of mood in his thought, owing to the delay in the coming of Jesus, which, at the outset, he expected might immediately happen. We have to make application of his principles for ourselves to present-day problems. All this is but a testimony to Paul's "sincerity" (2 Cor. ii. 17). It is a term he uses of himself, which denotes an atmosphere of crystal clearness, unclouded by any private interest or prejudice. He will not say more than he knows, nor will he import his own ideas into the subject. 1 Cor. xv. is the least dogmatic of Paul's utterances. He knows only in part, and prophesies in part. He is like ourselves on this great subject—groping his way and striving in faith to penetrate the mystery. We know only, like Socrates' disciples, "what our master said before his death, and how he died." We know in what spirit He faced the "last enemy."

We may now proceed to examine Paul's contribution to the doctrine of immortality, under those



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aspects that have exerted a creative influence on the Christian doctrine.

1. *Paul stands firmly for the position that the assurance of immortality—of an eternal life that will satisfy human emotion, give scope for human activity, and conserve for ever the achievements of human knowledge—cannot be based on purely ethical grounds, a foundation of human merit.* Fitness in the moral sense does not condition immortality. Personal immortality is the gift of God's grace. Paul does not even demand it, like the sufferers of old, as a vindication of what he undergoes. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." It is God alone who has "counted us worthy to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Immortality for him is a corollary of "justification," "adoption," "redemption," "salvation;" for one term succeeds another in Paul's writing to express, from the point of view of the particular moment in his thought, that absolute and eternal relationship with God, irrespective of human effort, which has come "through Jesus Christ." It follows inevitably from "that grace in which we stand." If this life that characterises a new world-order has broken in upon a sinful heart like Paul's, the persecutor of Jesus, he might well say, as he says of the moral life, "Where is boasting? It is excluded." The gift is for all. For Paul, the noblest human life begins, not ends, with immortality.

The assurance of a personal immortality is a divine gift, to be humbly and obediently accepted by us, of which we have the present pledge in our actual sanctification by the Spirit that enables us to say, "Abba, Father." This gift involves grave moral responsibilities indeed, in the present life; the

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life hereafter is a full and immediate personal life in the fellowship of God. To die is to be "with Christ," the perfect realisation of the promise given to us here. "We wait for our adoption, to wit the redemption of our body," *i.e.*, the perfecting of our present life, lived in communion with God. It may be remarked here that, in my opinion, the notion of an intermediate state—a period of moral preparation or quiescent waiting—does not really cross the horizon of Paul's thought.<sup>1</sup> It may have presented itself to him as the wheels of the Lord's chariot were seen to tarry; but to the end, even if he and others died before the Advent, the time was still short. He never entered upon speculation as to what happened in the interval. From the modern point of view this is a distinct limitation of his thought on this great subject; from his, it is an intelligible omission. Jesus Himself is the unspeakable "gift" of God that includes all other gifts.

Matthew Arnold, in his "St. Paul and Protestantism,"<sup>2</sup> says that "resurrection from the dead" in Paul's thought "has no essential connection with physical death." "The physical and miraculous aspect of the resurrection" does not "hold the first place in his mind." He does not deny that Paul believed in a physical resurrection, but he thinks that the really permanent and primary idea in his mind is that of an *ethical* resurrection. The physical resurrection, he holds, is a Jewish doctrine, like "an outer skin which the new ethical system of thought was sooner or later to slough off."<sup>3</sup> What Paul really stands for, according to Arnold, in the history of Christian

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v. 10 cannot be quoted. The "waking" are those who are alive at the coming of Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> Popular edition., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Bruce, "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity," p. 389.

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thought, is the idea of resurrection as a "rising, in this visible earthly existence, from the death of obedience to blind selfish impulse, to the life of obedience to the eternal moral order."<sup>2</sup>

Arnold has given prominence to a very important aspect of Paul's thought; nevertheless there underlies his words a complete misunderstanding of the content which Paul puts into "death." "Death" for Paul, is *both* physical and moral. Death is just unutterable doom. The conception is born of his own religious experience. Over no soul in the Jewish Church had fallen more deeply the shadow of death than on Paul. It is the Old Testament life in Sheol, moralised and interpreted as a life of continual subjection to the elemental spirits of evil, an eternal severance of communion with God, a complete victory for the powers of darkness over the individual life. It is the final and inevitable doom of fallen humanity—the wages of sin. "In Adam all die." There seems to have been something unique, even for Pharisaism, in such an attitude towards death. It is beside the point to argue against Paul, in modern scientific fashion, that death was in the world before sin. Paul's thought is of what death means for a man who like him, was in deep moral earnest. He can speak of death before death, "When the commandment came, sin came to life, and I died; the command that meant life, proved death for me" (Romans vii. 10). Death is the wages of sin; therefore, both sin and death mean separation from God. Only in union with God, in the favour of God, can men be said to live. In Jewish thought the "spirit" of God is given to the living, and withdrawn from the dead. This withdrawal does not mean the cessation of personal existence, but

<sup>2</sup> M. Arnold, *op. cit.* p. 62.

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rather a "paralysis of the entire personality."<sup>1</sup> It involves the arrestment of every human power and capacity whatever, the denial of all moral and social distinctions, a mere shadow of an existence. It is a negative and not a positive condition. Death in Paul's sense is not only physical, but a general doom of moral despair, as it fell upon the heart of a man full of moral earnestness, and alive with moral sincerity. It is a death that a man can die before death. Of this moral condition it might be said as of Dante's *Inferno*, *lasciate ogni speranza che voi entrate*.

The complaint is often made that the defect in Paul's teaching is that all men are not asked to pass through this intense moral struggle on their way to the kingdom of God ; and that it has tended to stereotype the psychology of conversion. This is no doubt a real danger. Men do enter the kingdom in quieter ways. Yet without this experience of Paul's, the Christian conception of eternal life would probably not have been so all inclusive and universal as it is. It was precisely in this way that Paul came to realise what we have called the "democratic" nature of Christ's teaching on immortality. In a sense, like his Master, Paul tasted "death" for all. He "filled up that which was lacking in the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church." His unique and somewhat rare experience has imparted a sweep and a scope to the Christian doctrine of immortality, and to the doctrine of salvation which includes it, which baffle imagination. It has ensured that immortality is the child, not of ethics, but of religion. The condition presupposed is not, "are we moral enough to deserve it?" but "have we

<sup>1</sup> H. A. A. Kennedy, "St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things," p. 105.

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faith enough to receive it?" The Pharisee had democratised ethics only too successfully. He encouraged a sin that may beset even democracy, the tyranny of the minority. The Pharisee disfranchised the failures. Paul succeeded in democratising religion anew. Whether men followed him in his experience or not, he was at least able to proclaim as the Christian gospel that immortality is no longer for those who deserve it, but for all who can believe it.

For Paul, the Promise is older than the Law. It was Abraham's faith, and not his aristocratic moral attainments, that was "counted to him for righteousness." "They that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii. 9). "Many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11). The physical resurrection of Jesus is not merely a fact of history, the exaltation of the Jewish Messiah; it is a personal event in Paul's own life, a great creative act of God, wrought in the heart of a bad man such as Paul conceived himself to be; to be imagined and described only in the language of the primeval cosmic event, when the Spirit brooded on the face of the waters, bringing order out of chaos (2 Cor. iv. 6). Jesus has brought not only life, but "immortality," to light. Light is for all. It came to Paul, but not on the score of personal merit. Immortality is part of his gospel of grace. God has flooded his soul with an infinite love, too great to be commensurate with his own deservings, and obviously intended, like the light at creation, for just and unjust alike. It revealed to him a new environment, where sin, pain, and death are no more. This new environment is the same to-day and for

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ever, coeval with the Life of the eternal Christ. We have no right to claim a place in it; we have none to refuse that place when it is offered us. We are asked to accept what is clearly revealed as the fundamental principle of the Universe, the redeeming love of God in Jesus Christ. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation."

2. Another aspect of Paul's teaching on immortality is this—*the belief in immortality lends a new value to the activities of this life.*

One would expect that the hope of the immediate Advent of Jesus Christ would tend to disintegrate social relationships and the sense of individual responsibility, and to provoke a certain restlessness and excitement. This is precisely what happened in Thessalonica under the influence of Paul's mission preaching. In no other letter is such stress laid on the value of conduct as commending the gospel (1 Thess. iv. 10ff.; v. 6-10), and on the moral value of honest labour. "Shun the loafer" (2 Thess. iii. 6). Paul speaks in the spirit of Jesus' words, "Work while it is called to-day; for the night cometh in which no man can work" (John ix. 4).<sup>1</sup> It is this inalienable connection in Paul's thought between the hope of the life to come and morality, that is our subject in this section.

Two topics of special interest call for brief consideration at the outset.

(1) There is strong evidence in favour of the conclusion that Paul thought only of a resurrection of the righteous—those "in Christ."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>cf. Phil. i. 22. "If I am still to live here below, that means for me a harvest of work."

<sup>2</sup> cf. R. H. Charles, "Eschatology," 2nd ed., pp. 444, 448ff. "In all Jewish books which teach a resurrection of the wicked, the resurrection is not conceived as a result of spiritual oneness with God, but merely as an eschatological arrangement for the furtherance of divine justice or some other divine end" (p. 444, n. 1).



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"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22 f), where the second "all" is not absolute, but means "all in Christ." This does not by any means involve that the wicked cease to be; nor does it involve for them necessarily an eternity of torment. It is simply the expression of Paul's sharp distinction in the quality of the two kinds of life after death, between the life in Sheol, which is really what Paul means by death, and the life "in Christ." Paul's speculation is always stopping short where we would like it to continue. We have already seen that for the reasons mentioned on p. 197, Paul does not deal with the conception of an intermediate state, because it did not occur to him as a practical problem requiring solution at the moment. In 1 Thess. iv. 14 he says, "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." In Phil. i. 23, to die is "to be with Christ." There is no difference between the two ideas of death, although the epistles are separated by a considerable interval of years. "Sleep" is simply a synonym for death, and to sleep in Christ is simply to die as a Christian. I think that most of the theories of so-called "development" in Paul's theological thought may be left to those who can accept them. No real modification is introduced at a further stage into his doctrine of immortality. No supposed doctrine of a "sleep," an intermediate state, can be read into his language without doing violence to the plain meaning of words.<sup>1</sup>

The only condition Paul knows, attaching to the gift of immortality, is "faith"; "the righteous" are those who have faith. The idea of moral

<sup>1</sup> But cf. C. F. Andrews, "The Value of the Theology of St. Paul for Modern Thought," pp. 201; a most admirable conspectus within brief compass of Paul's thought.

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probation after death seems a legitimate and comforting Christian speculation; it is not nearly so comforting, I think, as Paul's doctrine of faith, which by no means excludes it. The cry of even the feeblest faith at the last, as the story of the penitent robber shows, is answered by the gift of Eternal Life "with Me in Paradise."

"Betwixt the saddle and the ground  
Was mercy sought and mercy found."

Faith is no mere intellectual assent or homage done to an omnipotent God in the hope of placating Him. It contains within itself certain moral energies and possibilities that are not available to unaided moral effort. In a sense, faith is not man's work at all; "it is God that worketh in you."

Does the passage often quoted in this connection, Matt. xxv. 31-46, speak merely of those by whom Jesus Christ has never been apprehended as an object of faith? It certainly tells us "plainly that men may do things of final and decisive import in this life, even though Christ is unknown to them."<sup>1</sup> One is struck by the fact that here and there—they are not uncommon in our Army—men are found who have the most exalted conception of the place of kindness, unselfishness, and honour as virtues to be desired and imitated, but have no idea that they have any real connection with faith in Jesus Christ. I have myself seen the look of astonishment on a man's face, when the thought was presented to him that religion had everything to do with morality, as its source and sanction. He had thought of it either as the power behind a penal code, or as a system of spiritual magic mediated by a priest no matter of what denomination; having virtue at baptism, marriage, or death, or at any crisis in the individual life. I do not think that the idea of a future

<sup>1</sup> J. Denney, "Studies in Theology," p. 243; see also pp. 242 ff.

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“moral” probation is really relevant to the situation. Have those who are meant ever had a present probation of this kind? Has the idea of faith as a moral energy “working through love,” ever crossed the horizon of their minds? If not, who is responsible? It will be noticed that those “on the left hand” do not speak as though they had never acknowledged the claim of Jesus Christ, so far as homage is concerned. What is wrong is that they have failed to recognise the moral implicates of such homage. They had called Him, as Jesus said elsewhere, “Lord, Lord,” and not done the things which He said. The social conscience was absent. The only kind of probation known to Paul, or to any of the New Testament writers, is the chance of experiencing “saving faith,” which, on its objective side, is simply the breaking in on men’s hearts of the love of God in Jesus Christ, with all its moral cleansing and obligation.

The gospel of the grace and mercy of God, like all great truths, involves tremendous moral risks. Paul, in his life-long battle with antinomianism, had more reason than anyone to realise this; yet he went on preaching it to the end. His anticipation of an early and decisive Advent of Jesus would make certain directions of thought, necessary to the modern mind, unnecessary for him. Moral “probation” after death is an idea that presents more difficulty than any comfort it brings, and implies what is not only un-Pauline but un-Christian, that men are forgiven only as they are forgiveable. What new set of motives, for example, can be brought to bear after death that are not already here? The question really is, “Is *faith* possible after death?” One thing we can say on Paul’s principles. If there be a way of bringing the gospel of love to bear, after death,

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on those who have been ignorant of it here, and one compatible with the gift of human free-will, we may be sure that the Father will take it. If there are those whose environment—religious, intellectual, or actual—renders Christian appeal or the idea of Christian conduct inaccessible in this life, we may be certain that the full opportunities of the new and glorious environment for the awakening of faith will be given them.

(2) As regards Paul's doctrine of the Final Judgment, there is some considerable obscurity. Is the Judgment a process already at work among men, as in the Fourth Gospel; or is it an act of God in Christ, the Judge, which shall take place at the "day of the Lord"? It is probable that both ideas are found side by side, as in the Johannine writing, where the former predominates. In Paul's thought they vie with one another as means of expression. He can speak of the gospel as even now ■ "savour of life unto life," and "of death unto death" (2 Cor. ii. 16); he also speaks of men appearing before the judgment seat of Christ "to be requited for the deeds done in the body—good or evil."

One point is quite clear. Paul's faith in personal immortality exercises a powerful influence on Christian conduct. It is the expression of a hope, and "by hope we are saved." Hope and despair have a determining influence for good or evil on conduct. That great passage, 1 Cor. xv., concludes with a strong exhortation to moral effort. In this hope, the expectation of reward is present. It is easy to write in detached and academic fashion about virtue as a good in itself. A man may indeed set about his Christian duty, and perform it nobly, without the sound of the bells of heaven in his heart. The noblest deeds are

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often done by Christian instinct. "A man may pass through the evangelical experiences of conversion, redemption, regeneration, without thinking any more of the future than the little child thinks, but only sure and glad that his Father is with him."<sup>1</sup> There are, however, many experiences in life where we cannot afford to do without any motive that will bring hope and encouragement. There are lives from whom God has taken all that He can take, and Heaven only is left. The reward comes from the hand of Christ Himself, and no gift from that source can be tainted. The hope of reward is the hope of a realised gospel. Eternal life is the free gift of God, not His wages due to us. The reward, also, is not at all commensurate with our efforts and sufferings. It is "more abundant" as Paul says. It "exceeds" and "surpasses," and our suffering is not "worthy to be compared" with it. "To believe in immortality is one thing," says Robert Louis Stevenson, "but it is first needful to believe in life." Paul believes first in a life which Christ shared with us on earth, and still shares, shedding the glorious meaning of His love upon it, and bringing to light its hidden meanings and perplexities.

Moreover, eternal life means for Paul a new moral and spiritual environment. Sin and death are slain. The demon world is overcome. All fear and uncertainty are removed, under whose spell it is impossible for men to overcome the dominion of the flesh, and to live the life of the Spirit, which is Paul's term for the ethical aspect of the Christian life. Death itself is dead. As one of the evil powers hostile to God, it was both overcome and brought into bondage at the

<sup>1</sup>G. A. Smith, "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament," p. 214.

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Cross of Christ, so far as power over the individual Christian life is concerned :

■ As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,  
Death lies dead."

The fact that the past is pardoned, and the future is safe with God, produced for Paul that *perfect moral freedom* for which he longed in order to live the life in the flesh. By looking to the things that are unseen, Paul finds the antidote to moral faint-heartedness (2 Cor. iv. 16). The tyranny of the present world over his soul is broken ; his own grasp upon it is, if not less kindly, at least much less tenacious. We have already spoken of the two very powerful motives that are at work behind the Pauline ethic. The one is *noblesse oblige*, "walk worthily of your high calling ;" and the other is deepest gratitude. Both are inextricably woven into the fibre of Paul's ethical thought ; but the former is perhaps the more prominent in his thoughts of personal immortality ; the latter in his thoughts of the life here below. He feels at once that without the assurance of immortality, the present life sinks back to a pagan level of moral values. "Let us eat and drink ; for to-morrow we die." It is not chiefly because Paul believes that there will be compensation in another life for the vicissitudes and trials of this present one—a motive not elsewhere excluded—that he writes as he does in 1 Cor. xv. 30ff. Rather he means that by incurring danger at every turn, by standing daily at death's door, "by fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus,"<sup>1</sup> he has been expressing his conviction that loyalty to Jesus Christ, moral courage, and the refusal to indulge selfish and natural desire for comfort and ease, are themselves ■ testimony that there

<sup>1</sup> A reference probably to the occurrence in Acts. xix. 23f.



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is another and higher order of things in which we already share. If this is not so, "why stand we in jeopardy every hour?"

In this order of things he is himself a participant, and thereto he is pledged. It is a high sense of duty, *noblesse oblige*, that animates him. In that moral order death, the sense of inexorable doom and the foe of all duty, ranks as one of the enemies of mankind to be destroyed (1 Cor. xv. 26). If there be no resurrection, the whole moral order falls to pieces; it vanishes as an unreality. The standard of Christian values for this life goes with it. "It does not pay to fight with beasts at Ephesus; rather let us placate them, avoid them, and live a quiet life." "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die. Let us make the most of what this life has to offer."

Moral strenuousness, then, in Paul's view, consists in a constant direction of will, thought, and heart towards the risen and exalted Jesus, in other words in "faith." The result that is going on even now, is a gradual transformation of the Christian's whole character into one that shall be suitable to the eternal life "with Christ." This perfected kind of moral life Paul calls "glory." "Glory" means the life that Jesus lives now. It is being manifested already in the lives of Christian people. It will characterise them wholly in the great Day when they shall see Him face to face. "We pass from one stage of glory to another, a glory which comes from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

3. *Personal immortality and the resurrection of the body.*—Paul lays great stress upon the necessity for a *body* in the resurrection life. The idea of a disembodied spirit was entirely foreign to his thought, either in reference to the risen Jesus, or to the life of believers after death. The Holy Spirit

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is always the Spirit of the risen Jesus, no mere influence of God on the human soul. The Greek doctrine of a future life which consisted in an escape of the spirit from the prison-house of the body, would for Paul have been equivalent to a doctrine of death, and not of life. Quite clearly his doctrine of personal immortality included the necessity that the human spirit should be able to find means of expression in an organism which would occupy the same place in relation to it, as the body of flesh. "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall also make your mortal bodies live by His indwelling Spirit within you" (Romans viii. 11). Paul's emphasis upon the resurrection body, is really an emphasis on personal immortality.

It is very necessary that we should approach the doctrine from his point of view, and therefore sympathetically. No greater caricature of Paul's thought on the subject could be imagined than what is popularly supposed to be the modern orthodox Christian teaching on the subject of the resurrection body. Paul is not to be made responsible for modern materialistic absurdities, either Christian or anti-Christian. When Paul enters so fully as he does in 1 Cor. xv., into the question of the resurrection body, he is really concerned—like the Corinthians who asked him, "How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?"—with the question of personal identity after death. Paul is speaking to Greeks, and to Jews affected by Greek thought. They were not necessarily of the educated type, but ordinary men and women, whose ways of thought regarding the future life were determined by vague philosophic ideas which had filtered down to them. Hellenistic

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thought on immortality was governed by the conception that the body was the tomb of the soul. The soul was immortal, a spark from the divine fire according to the prevailing Stoic thought, but destined ultimately to be reabsorbed into the divine. The Hebrew doctrine of Sheol paralysed the personality; the Hellenistic extinguished it. For the latter, the body was the seat of the affections and passions. Its severance from the soul, and ultimate destruction, meant relief and release from all that stood between men and the blessedness of the divine life. In effect the Hellenistic doctrine was a denial of personality, measured by all that personality means for the average man. Personality includes human energy and human affection. These aspects of human nature were doomed to destruction.

Yet the Hellenistic doctrine is strangely inconsistent. It did not deny a place to human knowledge in the life to come; but the life to come, not necessarily endless, becomes thereby a state into which only educated people can enter with any eagerness. The Greek emphasis on knowledge as the way of salvation is nowhere more clearly seen than in what the later Stoics taught, as to the way in which the souls of dead men passed the time that remained to them before the next great world-conflagration, when the never ending cycle of life would begin anew. They spent it in learning the hidden meanings of things; the ways of the sky and the stars, the reasons of eclipses, earthquakes, and tides, all regarded as exercising such a profound influence on the fortunes of individual men. These things had baffled their understanding in the earthly life; now they "watch the stars go round." Seneca, for example, consoles his correspondent Marcia, on the occasion of her son's

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death, with the thought that her dead father will be teaching her boy the courses of the stars in their neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup>

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.*

Such an academic atmosphere, even if not completely understood, might well fill with despair and shrinking, or sheer indifference, the minds of the Corinthian community of whom not many were "wise," or "prominent," or of "good birth" (1 Cor. i. 26). We can all the more readily understand Paul's condemnation of the "wisdom of this world" that presumes to give such stones for bread to sorrowing and hungering souls. It is remarkable that the Corinthians evidently were prepared to accept the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus, but denied that the same privilege was extended to the common brotherhood. His Resurrection was an abnormal fact, arising from some uniqueness in His personality. Belief in His presence with them, and in the beauty of His personal life, might somewhat lighten the burdens of the present, but could give no assurance, either of a personal immortality, or that they would meet their dead again. "If in this life only<sup>2</sup> we have hope in Christ, we are of all men to be pitied most." Thus, in the mental attitude of the Corinthians, we have a clue to Paul's insistence on a bodily resurrection for all believers. He is really concerned to insist on a personal immortality, like the life of the risen Christ Himself. For Paul, the resurrection body of Jesus, as He appeared to him on the Damascus road, guaranteed

<sup>1</sup> Seneca "Ad Marciam," 25, quoted by E. Bevan, "Stoics and Sceptics," p. III n.

<sup>2</sup> The context seems to demand that "only" be construed with "in this life." cf. Matt. v. 47. As an adverb it is placed in an emphatic position at the end of the sentence, corresponding to the emphasis of "in this life" at the beginning.

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that he saw no phantom, but a real living person. He appeared to him as really as to the others (1 Cor. xv. 3-8). "Have not I seen Jesus our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1). This Jesus had taken our human flesh upon Him. He retains His human appearance still; He has a body. That is for Paul the guarantee that he also will have a body—remain a human personality. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen" (1 Cor. xv. 13).

Moreover, Paul's doctrine of the resurrection of the body takes shape in his mind, not merely in response to the apologetic need of the Corinthian Church, but far more in response to a deep internal religious necessity of his own soul. For him, as for every Jew, the thought of an immortal soul, without an immortal body, is not only inconceivable, but horrible. The conjunction of soul and body constituted the personality. To the Hebrew, personality is indestructible. It consists of "soul" and "flesh." In the Old Testament, at death, the person is not annihilated. He continues to subsist in Sheol, the place of the dead, though in a shadowy, indeterminate, and feeble form. We have already seen what "death" meant for Paul, the Jew, and how naturally it is connected with sin. Both sin and death mean separation from God. The state of death can be better described negatively, than positively. It involves the atrophy of every human power and capacity whatever, the denial of all moral and social distinctions. However difficult such a conception of personality may be for a modern mind, we can at least gather from it how vital the doctrine of a resurrection of the body was to Paul's thought. Without it life, and far more eternal life, was an impossibility. To the Hebrew, the

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nature of life is to be personal<sup>1</sup> and individual, as personal as the God who gave it, and in whose favour alone it is possible. The doctrine that man is made in the "image" of God is really a statement in Hebrew fashion that man as originally constituted, in distinction from the animals, is a personal being; not the slave but the master of creation, which is his environment. He has "dominion" in which his real personal life is exercised. This is the gift of God to him.

There can be little doubt that the Old Testament has no conception of God as a formless spirit (*cf.* Skinner, "Genesis," p. 32). Jesus in Paul's thought is actually the image of God, not "made after His image" (2 Cor. iv. 4); Christians are "re-created" after Christ's image. The image of God has been defaced by the sin of man. The purpose of God in creating man "after His own image" has been frustrated. Man has become subject when he ought to have dominion. "As we have borne the image that belongs to man made of the dust of the ground, so shall we bear the image of the Man of heavenly nature and origin" (1 Cor. xv. 49). "Redemption of the body" means for Paul the restoration of man's personal life of dominion over all evil that has taken possession both of nature and of man's flesh—in other words "salvation." The idea seems to be that, in the image of the "earthly" man, the body is the organism through which the spirit reaches expression; so, in the life to come, there will be an organism or body similar to the body of the risen Jesus, a body of "glory" that can respond to the new environment.

Paul strikes a deeply personal note in the moving utterance of 2 Cor. v. 1-10. It is possible to read 1 Cor. xv., as the utterance of a preacher who

<sup>1</sup> *cf.* J. Royce, "Conception of Immortality, *passim*," esp. pp. 50ff.



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is chiefly concerned to disabuse the minds of the Corinthians of a theological error, and so to miss the human sympathy that is born of a personal anxiety regarding this very matter of personal immortality, which so clearly emerges in the former passage. It was a problem that pressed heavily on Paul's own heart, and had a deep and moving interest for him. The personal note in 2 Cor. v. 1-10 is still more marked, if we translate the plurals "we" and "our," by "I" and "my," as it is grammatically allowable to do:<sup>1</sup>

"I know that if this earthly tent-home of mine is taken down, God has a home for me, made by no human hand, eternal in the heavens. Truly it makes me sigh, this yearning to be under the shelter of my heavenly house, if indeed in the hour of death I shall be found actually so covered<sup>2</sup> and not 'naked.' I do indeed sigh within this tent of mine, weighed down with anxiety, because I do not want to be unclothed, but to be under the shelter of the heavenly house, that what is mortal in me may be absorbed by life. I am prepared for this change by God, who has given me the first instalment of it as a pledge, in the Spirit. My confidence, then, remains whatever may happen. I know that so long as my home is in the body I am not at home with the Lord—I have to walk by faith, without seeing Him—and in this confidence I would fain rather leave my bodily home, and be at home with the Lord. Hence also it is my ambition to please Him, whether in the body or away from it; for we must all appear (living or dead) before the judgment-seat of Christ, that

<sup>1</sup> cf. Moulton, "Grammar of New Testament Greek," Vol. I., p. 86; and Moffatt's translation, on which the following rendering is largely founded.

<sup>2</sup> The reading is somewhat uncertain. cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, "St. Paul and the Mystery Religions," p. 185.

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each may be requited for what he has done in the body<sup>1</sup>, well or ill."

In these words we have a very remarkable description of the thoughts with which Paul faced death. Particularly in one respect is the utterance striking. What does he mean by the alternative, "unclothed" or "under the shelter of the heavenly house?" He is uncertain whether he is to be among the living or the dead when Christ comes, and his instincts are all for escaping the dreary and repulsive human experience of dying. The greater part, also, of 1 Cor. xv. relates to the experience of death. Only in verses 30-1 is the case of the living at the second Advent taken into account. Their case is combined with that of the dead, inasmuch as "we must all be changed." What is often regarded as pre-eminently a dogmatic and outworn statement on a somewhat academic theme, is seen to be alive with the sense of a great personal desire and urgency. Paul himself shuddered as he wrote the word "naked," "disembodied," in 2 Cor. v. 3. His hope still is that Christ may come before the last enemy; he is faced with the other possibility. For the moment he has allowed the Greek conception, "the body, the grave of the soul," to rise before him in all its horror. On these terms immortality meant the death of love and hope, of every human energy and relationship. "Nakedness" is the condition of the disembodied spirit. The transition from the mortal to the immortal body is more tolerable under the conditions of the second Advent, than under the conditions of dying. It seems to me that Paul does contemplate in dying a moment of dissolution, when the "tent-home" is taken down, and he awaits the

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.* "Through the medium or instrumentality of the body."

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shelter of the eternal "house"<sup>1</sup> in the heavens. It is death and not the coming of Jesus, that is in his mind in 2 Cor. iv. 16. His "outward man is decaying," he is "dying daily." Constant suffering and exposure are killing him, and each day brings him nearer the great human fact of dying. The moment of dissolution induces a shrinking even for his triumphant Christian faith; it has done so for many another. It is a brother man who says, "If indeed death shall find me actually so covered and not naked."

Thoughts like these suggest that the idea of the resurrection body as a development of the present body is foreign to Paul's thought. When in 2 Cor. iii. 18 he speaks of our being transformed into the image of Jesus "from glory to glory," he no doubt means that the actual human personal life of the Christian is in this life undergoing a process of transformation. He is not separating the spiritual and the physical. The process can only refer to the "inward man which is being renewed from day to day" (2 Cor. iv. 16). "The life of Jesus is being manifested in my<sup>2</sup> mortal flesh" (*ib.* iv. 11). When, however, he does think of soul and body apart, "quite plainly, in Paul's view the present material body has nothing to do with the resurrection or the future Kingdom of God"<sup>3</sup> "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," nor can the "perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Cor. xv. 50).

At this point Paul brings forward the conception of a "spiritual body" which has no real analogy in the Jewish or Gentile thought of his time.

<sup>1</sup> Not Heaven itself, but the body of the transfigured life.

<sup>2</sup> Again translating by the singular.

<sup>3</sup> H. A. A. Kennedy, "St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things," p. 238.

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The conception is directly suggested to him by the actual sight of the spiritual body of Jesus on the Damascus road, and was no doubt confirmed by the accounts of the Resurrection appearances as preserved by the primitive Church. It is, as we have seen, futile to regard the appearance of Jesus to Paul as a projection of his own thought. It was an actual appearance of the risen Christ to him, the last of the great series detailed in 1 Cor. xv. 1ff. At the coming of Jesus, He shall "transform" our present earthly body, "the body of our humiliation, so that it assumes the same form as the body of His glory, by the same power which enables Him also to subject all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21). It is noticeable that the transformation is an act of power, a sudden act. The idea of development is entirely foreign to Paul's thought. There can be no question with him of any utilisation of the materials of the present body. Such a question would never occur to him. What he was concerned with was that there should be a body at all in the transfigured life.

Thus all modern speculations as to the nature of the spiritual body and its connection with the present body, have no real point of contact at Paul's thought. His final answer regarding the possibility or impossibility of a resurrection body is "the sovereign power of God." It is the answer that he gives to the problem of the rejection of Israel in Romans ix., and it is the answer that he gives here. "God giveth it a body even as it pleased Him." The highest manifestation that Paul knows of the power of God is the Resurrection of Jesus. "He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead shall make even your mortal bodies live by the Spirit that dwelleth in you." The Greek word

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means—"shall confer on them life." The words do not imply any "quickenings" of the actual flesh. The human spirit and the human body together, are regarded as uniting to form one complete person. He means that the whole person is quickened by the life-giving Spirit. Paul has in view in this passage, what we would call the physical life of the believer, not merely the body *quâ* body.<sup>1</sup> His utterance about the fate of the actual body are quite decisive. "My outward man decays" (2 Cor. iv. 16). "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50).

Paul never analyses, as we do, the single fact of death. Separate it from the fact of sin, and say that death was in the world before sin, and immediately we are speaking of death in a sense alien to Paul's thought. We mean physical death, apart from any moral considerations whatever. For Paul, like all the Biblical writers, the distinction between moral and physical is meaningless. Death separates from God, and so does sin, and the two are in his thought bound up in one conception of doom and despair. Occasionally, he speaks of death and dying in the ordinary physical sense; then, however, he speaks of a death that has lost its terrors. His normal use of the word "death" connotes, not the destruction, but the negation, the withering of the whole personality. It means the complete suspension of all those energies, moral, intellectual, emotional, and physical, which go to form the unity of life. "He would not have affirmed of the believer that originally he possessed a natural life, but when he surrendered himself to Christ received a spiritual. The new life is a renewal of the old from its very foundations.

<sup>1</sup> H. A. A. Kennedy, "St Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things," p. 153.

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It is not a renewal of one part, but of the whole. It embraces the physical (to use our distinctions) as well as the ethical or religious. For St. Paul the sum of the believer's experiences is a unity. Life includes the totality of his energies. It cannot be divided up into provinces, of which one may be contrasted with another. Its only contrast lies in death. Death, for the apostle, means the ruin of the whole personality. Life means its triumphant continuance in the power of the Spirit beyond the barriers of earth and time, in conformity with the nature of the glorified Christ, who is the image of the invisible God"<sup>1</sup>

4. *Individuality in the life to come.*—While we bear in mind that it is this supreme interest in personal immortality which accounts for the emphasis that Paul lays on his doctrine of the spiritual body, it has to be remembered that even a doctrine of personal immortality may fall short of satisfying the deepest instincts of the human soul as directed to the life hereafter. Personality must include the instinct for individuality. If a distinction is to be drawn between personality and individuality, we might say that personality safeguards us against mere absorption in the divine World-Soul, in God; individuality against absorption in mere uniformity, both here and hereafter. The Christian dogmatic expression of immortality has done full justice to personality, but has hardly done justice to individuality. The later Jewish thought on this subject, contemporary with Paul, suffered from the same defect. The picture is of a life characterised by intolerable, colourless monotony. Bousset ("Religion des Judenthums," p. 318) quotes the utterance of a certain Rabbi; in the future life "there is neither eating nor drinking, neither

<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, "St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things," p. 157.



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reproduction nor growth, but the righteous sit with crowns on their heads, and enjoy themselves in the brightness of the godhead." Very seldom in the apocalyptic literature do we find religious and ethical conceptions of the life to come.

The future life has been imagined as a featureless level of personal existence, where all individual tastes and activities are hidden in a blaze of eternal light. Popular conceptions of the future life, largely based on literal interpretations of the pictorial language of the Bible, suffer much from this monotonous uniformity; it must be confessed that scientific theology has ultimately been responsible for the grave defect. Not enough scope has been given to the passion for individuality. Poets like Browning in "Andrea del Sarto," have expressed it:

"What would one have?  
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—  
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem  
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,  
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me  
To cover."

or in "Abt Vogler":

"Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable Name?  
Builder and maker, Thou, of houses not made with hands!  
What, have fear of change from Thee who art ever the same?  
Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy power expands?  
There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;  
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;  
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;  
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist;  
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power  
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,  
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.  
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,  
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,  
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;  
Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it by and by."

Katherine Tynan's poem, "The Flower of Youth," written for the heart of the times, expresses in daring

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fashion the sense that the individuality of youth must have its place in the life to come:

“ Now heaven is by the young invaded ;  
Their laughter's in the House of God.  
Stainless and simple as He made it  
God keeps the heart o' the boy unflawed.  
The old wise saints look on and smile,  
They are so young and without guile.”<sup>1</sup>

Can we find in Paul this recognition of immortal individuality? I think we can. There are at least two passages in his writings that are like windows enabling us, if only to glance, at certain thoughts of his inmost soul, which seem to turn in this direction. Both are found in the Corinthian letters, 1 Cor. iii. 10-15 and xv. 38-42. (1) In the first passage he has in mind the sectarianism that was rife in Corinth, and the exaggerated rivalry that sharply distinguished the types of message and activity, which were seen in Paul and Apollos and Cephas. Paul is, of course, thinking specially of what we would call religious activity, but he clearly recognises the great principle of individuality, which must have free scope within the great temple of the Christian Church, an individuality both of preacher, and of hearer (*cf.* vv. 21, 22). The great Day-break, with its cleansing fire, will test each man's work, and that which is intrinsically valuable and precious—“gold, silver, precious stones”—will stand the test. There is a clear recognition that much of our human activity is dross. The fire of

<sup>1</sup> In a striking volume of war sermons by the Rev. Charles Allan, of Greenock, the following passage occurs: “We had looked on the Beyond as the last refuge of world-worn and world-weary souls. But our boys have changed all that for us, and set our hearts singing even at the hour of burnt offering a new song of the Lord, with its chorusing trumpets calling to joys undreamed and deeds of high emprise. Greatly daring, we had hoped that out of the war would come a new earth. And already it has given us a new heaven.”—“The Beautiful Thing that has happened to our Boys,”

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judgment is a cleansing and refining fire, which leaves untouched the gold of human thought and effort. It will devour all useless and wrong activity. This will involve personal pain; we shall "suffer loss," but the man himself will be snatched from the flames. We might also compare the passage recounting the variety of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 4ff.). (2) 1 Cor. xv. 38-42 is even more relevant to the subject. God, he says, will provide not only an organism of spiritual expression, a body, in the life to come, but He will provide a fit and suitable body for each spirit or personality, "as it pleases Him." This is confirmed by the variety of such bodies in nature. Each seed that falls into the ground and dies, is provided with a suitable body, when it springs up. Each animal has its own kind of capacity, varying with its constitution and needs. Even the heavenly "bodies," sun, moon, and stars, differ from one another in "glory" where the word "glory" is used in a physical sense not alien to the meaning—"brightness"—it sometimes has in the Old Testament. It is uncertain whether Paul looks upon the sun, moon and stars, like Plato, Philo and the Stoics, as living beings. We may be sure that many of his hearers did. Their "glory" is a manifestation of the divine power, and even they are not monotonously uniform. To speak in modern terms, Paul believes that it is a law of nature that whether in natural or in spiritual forms of existence, individuality is preserved, and a body is provided which is best fitted to be the organ of the life that informs it.<sup>1</sup> "So also is the resurrection of the dead."

"What we all wish to keep," says James, "is just these individual restrictions, these self-same tendencies and peculiarities that define us to our-

<sup>1</sup> cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, pp. 244ff.

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selves and others, and constitute our identity, so called. Our finitenesses and limitations seem to be our personal essence; and when the finiting organ drops away, and our several spirits revert to their original source and resume their unrestricted conditions, will they be anything like those sweet streams of feeling which we know, and which even now our brains are sifting out from the great reservoir for our enjoyment here below."<sup>1</sup> In the monograph from which these words are taken, the writer speaks of the modern difficulty of the "incredible and intolerable number of beings, which with our modern imagination, we must believe to be immortal, if immortality be true."<sup>2</sup> It is a difficulty that arises from the vaster scale of times, spaces, and numbers opened up by modern science. "How inessential in the eyes of God must be the small surplus of the individual's merit, swamped as it is in the vast ocean of the common merit of mankind, dumbly and undauntedly doing the fundamental duty, and living the heroic life:"<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that James's solution is a religious solution. The love of God has no "saturation-point of interest," like ours. He "has so inexhaustible a capacity for love that His call and need is for a literally endless accumulation of created lives."<sup>4</sup> And this is essentially Paul's solution also, in obedience to the mind of Jesus Himself, who nowhere promulgated the doctrine of individual and personal immortality more clearly than when He said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? Yet not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. The very hairs on your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are worth

<sup>1</sup> "Human Immortality," pp. 58f.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* p. 82.

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far more than sparrows"<sup>1</sup> (Matt. x. 31.). Paul well knew that there is no "saturation-point of interest" in the love of God. His applications of the doctrine of individuality in the future life have not the range that modern thought and modern need require. God never intended Paul, or any other New Testament writer, to do for the modern mind what it can do for itself. What Paul has given us, as part of the revelation of the love of God to him, is the divine recognition of this human passion for individuality. He states it in relation to questions of contemporary interest. In these changeful days, when prayer, self-sacrifice, and immortality are the three great themes that clamour for Christian interpretation, what Paul says on immortality is richly suggestive; especially so his emphasis on human individuality in the sight of God. His great gospel of free grace includes it, and necessitates it. He stated it in opposition to his Jewish opponents who would have suppressed human individuality by their insistence on a single type of ritual as necessary to salvation; in his reiteration of the doctrine of moral freedom; above all in his great claim that the Gentiles—representing that great world of thought and activity little understood by the Church of his day—are fellow-heirs of Eternal Life.

<sup>1</sup> "The distinction is qualitative, not quantitative."—Moffatt, "The New Testament, a New Translation."

## XIV

### IS PAUL A MYSTIC?

THE term "*unio mystica*"—the mystical union between Christ and the believer—has become so well established in the theological interpretation of Paul's thought, that it seems presumption to challenge it. We have already seen that the doctrine of the indwelling Christ must be interpreted first of all in relation to the community, and not to the individual. The solitary instance where Paul says, "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20), he himself quickly interprets in language that is meant to remove all misunderstanding as to his meaning. "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." He hastens to say that he refers to his ordinary life "in the flesh." Evidently "transiency," which James sets down as one of the notes of truly mystical states, in the sense that they cannot be sustained for long, is here absent.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, many other passages in his writings, that seem to bear a mystical sense, as for example where he speaks of "dying with Christ," being "crucified with Christ;" or his references to the Christian sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. To interpret these utterances in a mystical sense, is, one fears, to put large tracts of the Pauline experience out of the reach of many. Of course,

<sup>1</sup> "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 381. The other three notes are ineffability, "noetic" quality (state of knowledge) and passivity. *Ib.* pp. 380 f.



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no one who is habitually distrustful and suspicious either of the experience or of the language of religious emotion, need hope ever to understand Paul. Such emotion must also stand the most stringent ethical tests. "Mystical" in this connection is sometimes used in a loose way as synonymous with "spiritual" or "emotional." In this sense all religion is mystical. At the same time when Paul's "mystical" utterances are interpreted as an absorption of his personality in the being of Christ, when it is said, as for example by Feine,<sup>1</sup> that there are moments when to Paul "Christ becomes not only a person but, as it were, a principle," one feels that many, with good reason, will despair of ever coming to terms with much of the Pauline thought.

The terms *mystic* and *mysticism* are extremely elusive and difficult to define. Great confusion may easily arise in their use. Both philosophy and religion may be "mystical." With the philosophical use we have not to do here: only with the religious. Sometimes mysticism is made to include all religious emotions; religious convictions that are not arrived at by a process of reasoning; the accompaniments of a moral change like conversion. In other words this means that all vital religion, that is neither formal nor legalistic, is mystical in its relation to reality. The real name for what is meant is "intuitional." When Jesus spoke of the "Father" and His providence, He quite clearly expected—and was not disappointed in His expectation—that those to whom He spoke would "see" what was meant. In no sense is this great truth about God a deduction. It is an intuition. In any true sense, it is not "mystical." Dr. Inge's treatment of the subject in "Christian

<sup>1</sup> "Jesus Christus und Paulus," p. 53.

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Mysticism " is vitiated by his apparently extending the term to include all spiritual, all " vital " religious experience. The mystic is opposed to the legalist.<sup>1</sup> His book is really a defence of the religious against the scientific spirit. Mysticism proper may generally be defined, not as direct intercourse with God—surely all religion is that—but as the definite sense that all intervening helps and channels to that end, such as symbols or sacraments, are a barrier to the immediate knowledge of God. Mysticism in the history of religion has usually been a reaction against formalism and rationalism. It is essentially a protest, and in each age has certain characteristics derived from the form of religion it opposes. In general God is approached by the mystic directly, through purgation, which is usually expressed as a struggle between flesh and spirit ; also through adoration, which may express itself in a transport of love or ecstasy. The mystic has visions, in which he " sees," " hears," or " feels " ultimate reality. Lady Julian of Norwich had visions which, she tells us, reached her in three ways, " by bodily sight, by word formed in mine understanding, and by spiritual sight." Of this last, she adds, " I may never fully tell it."<sup>2</sup>

There are certain general considerations which seem to render it impossible to class Paul, on any historical estimate of his place in religious thought, among the religious mystics. For example, the " joy " which is so characteristic a mood of his, is quite unlike the ecstasy of the mystic. One grave defect of interpretation in Myers' classical poem, " Saint Paul," is that he sometimes makes Paul speak in the passionate language of sexual human love, a typical mystic form of expression

<sup>1</sup> *e.g.*, pp. 5f, 36.

<sup>2</sup> C. F. E. Spurgeon, " Mysticism," p. 120.

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of which Paul is quite incapable. His attitude, also, towards pain and evil and sin is quite unmystical. They are factual, independent realities. "Tribulation" is, with him, a favourite expression, and no one can question his sense of the reality of sin. Again, surely, "purgation" in Paul is not a condition, but a result of union with God and Christ. Anything else would negative his gospel of free grace, and would not exclude boasting. It would be a serious disadvantage if Paul had to be identified with any single type of religious thought, such as the mystical. On that hypothesis the extraordinary universality of his appeal would be inexplicable.

It is, however, perplexing to find that Paul undoubtedly describes himself as capable of certain "visions" and "revelations" that can only be described as mystical. He speaks "in tongues more than you all."<sup>1</sup> The experience described in 2 Cor. xii. 2ff, evidently did not stand alone, and certainly betokens the mystic temperament. The ascent into Paradise, and the hearing of words "unlawful for a man to utter" are decisive on this score. There was undoubtedly a mystical strain in Jewish thought, expressed quite clearly not only in the apocalyptic writings, but also in Rabbinism. In the latter, however, ecstatic experiences seem to have been not only held in check, but even discouraged,<sup>2</sup> especially in later times. The ecstatic condition also played a part in the prophetic experience in the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup> The words of Psalm lxxiii. 23-26 have been called mystical in tone, but are really an example of religious intuition. We have no space to enter into this matter

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 6, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Sirach, iii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. x. 5, 6, 10, xix. 20, 24; Ezekiel xxxvii. 1ff.

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fully, and the reader must be referred to the discussion in Kennedy's "St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions" (pp. 33*ff*), or to Abelson, "The Immanence of God in Rabbinic Literature" (*passim*, especially pp. 367-375). One characteristic of all true mysticism is passivity. The subject's will is merged in a superior power; in other words his personality is absorbed. As Inge points out, distinction, and not separation, is the mark of personality.<sup>1</sup> In Jewish thought in its so-called "mystical" developments, there is always a corrective instinct which insists that the human personality is distinct, but not separate from God. The man can always say, "Here am I, send me."<sup>2</sup> In this sense Paul is normally Hebrew of the Hebrews. "Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God that worketh in you."

The important thing to note, in Paul's case, is the attitude he adopts towards his own "mystical" experiences. In no case does his type of thought betoken individuality more clearly than in this connection. We may sum up what deserves to be said on this matter under three headings.

1. His attitude towards his own "visions" and "revelations" (2 Cor. xii. 1*ff*).

2. Towards the ecstatic spiritual phenomena described in 1 Cor. xii.

3. Towards the non-Christian mysticism of his day, which had permeated the whole Græco-Roman world through the influence of the Hellenistic mystery-religions.

1. *Paul's "visions" and "revelations."*

The passage, 2 Cor. xii. 1*ff*, may be thus translated:—"I am driven to make a boastful claim.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *cf.* "Son of Man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee." Ezek. ii. 1.

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There is nothing to be gained by it, but visions and revelations of the Lord may naturally be mentioned here<sup>1</sup>. Fourteen years ago, a man in Christ whom I know, was caught up to the third heaven. Was he in the body or out of it? I don't know. God knows. What I do know is that this man, in the body or out of it (God knows which), was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakably sacred words, beyond the power of human speech to repeat. Of the fact of this experience, I am prepared to boast, but not of my share in it, except as regards the human weaknesses that accompanied it. If I did care to boast of other similar experiences, I would be no 'fool,' for I would be speaking the truth. I refrain, however; for it is my wish that no one should make an estimate of me on any other grounds than what he sees in me, or gathers from my words."

The passage is a striking one, if for no other reason than the evident anxiety of Paul to avoid using, so far as "visions" are concerned, the first personal pronoun, and his speaking of himself as a third person—"a man in Christ." He shows no such hesitation in the course of his ordinary writing. The attitude of critical detachment towards this vision is very marked. He sets no permanent value upon it as substantiating his claim to apostleship, which is established much more convincingly by his sufferings than by his ecstasies. Paul's supreme concern is to demonstrate that Jesus Christ speaks and works through him. The strength of Jesus is made perfect in his weakness. No doubt this attitude of caution towards "mysteries" is a symptom of the Rabbinical strain in Paul's mind. It is also, however, a mark of the religious thinker, who clearly understands, and desires it to be

<sup>1</sup> *Lit.* "I will come to visions," etc., as though the topic naturally obtruded itself in the connection and train of thought.

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understood, that Christianity is not dependent on certain abnormal and extraordinary mental states, but is capable of making its appeal to the normal and universal human life. God makes His presence felt in human hearts by the "gifts" of the Spirit, and these "gifts" or "talents" are manifold. "There are varieties of talents, but the same Spirit ; there are varieties of service, but the same Lord ; there are varieties of effects, but the same God who effects everything in everyone" (1 Cor. xii. 4 ff, Moffatt).

In this connection the important question is raised as to whether Paul's conversion experience is to be interpreted as a "mystical" experience.<sup>1</sup> Paul certainly speaks of it as a "revelation" in Gal. i. 16, and the three accounts of it given in Acts, while differing in certain details which need not disturb us, at least agree in this, that the risen Jesus appeared to Paul, and spoke to him. The fact, however, that Paul speaks of it as a revelation, does not involve that it was also a "vision" properly speaking. Visions are only one of the ways in which revelations may be made. It is, of course, impossible to identify the vision described in 2 Cor. xii. 1ff with the conversion experience. Paul gives certain historical data which would bring the experience within the period of his Christian life, but the "fourteen years ago" would indicate a date in or about the year 44 A.D., and about six years subsequent to the conversion. Moreover, while on the Damascus road, Paul "fell to the ground"; here he describes himself as "in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell," and as "caught up into the third heaven." In addition to all this, it is inconceivable that Paul should take up that position of critical detachment towards his con-

<sup>1</sup> See Inge, *op. cit.* p. 63.



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version experience, which he occupies in this narrative. It is unwarrantable to regard the conversion experience as one of the same character as this vision. For one thing, the subjective conditions are different. The "rapture" of 2 Cor. xii. 1ff is spoken of as something quite incomprehensible. Paul does not really know what happened. He knows only that it happened to "a man in Christ," in other words that it belonged to his own Christian experience. There is even no ground for saying that it was ever repeated. Now this tone is altogether different from that adopted in regard to the conversion experience. Again and again he refers to that as the decisive and determining influence of his life. It is capable of being classified among the objective facts of the Christian gospel (1 Cor. xv. 8).

Sometimes a parallel to Paul's sense of being "in Christ," is sought in the absorption of one personality in another, such as is exemplified in the case of human love and friendship. Matthew Arnold's "St. Paul and Protestantism" is occupied with this idea. "The voluntary, rational, and human world, of righteousness, moral choice, effort, filled the first place in his spirit. But the necessary, mystical, and divine world, of influence, sympathy, emotion, filled the second; and he could pass naturally from the one world to the other.

. . . . . Of such a mysterious power and its operations some clear notion may be got by anybody who has ever had any overpowering attachment. Everyone knows how being in love changes for the time a man's spiritual atmosphere, and makes animation and buoyancy where before there was flatness and dulness.

. . . A powerful attachment will give a man spirits and confidence which he could by no means

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call up or command of himself ; and in this mood he can do wonders which would not be possible to him without it. We have seen how Paul felt himself to be for the sake of righteousness *apprehended*, to use his own expression, by Christ" (*pop. ed.* pp. 40ff). In another passage he speaks of " the wonder-working power of attachment " acting upon Paul's " moral sympathies, and the desire of righteousness." " Paul felt this power penetrate him ; and he felt, also, how by perfectly identifying himself through it with Jesus, and in no other way, could he ever get the confidence and the force to do as Jesus did. He thus found a point in which the mighty world outside man, and the weak world inside him, seemed to combine for his salvation. The struggling stream of duty, which had not volume enough to bear him to his goal, was suddenly reinforced by the immense tidal wave of sympathy and emotion" (*ib.* p. 47).

Arnold forgets that Paul's " moral sympathies " were once all *against* Jesus, and that his " desire of righteousness " was not only " acted upon " but shattered by his " apprehension." His passion of love for Jesus is indeed without a parallel in the history of religious emotions, but it is forgotten that the love is evoked by the particular relationship described as being " in Christ," and not *vice versa*. In the origin of this relationship, God in Christ is the Agent. It is not more and not less mystical in its nature than the sense of sonship with God, which is the supreme gift of the spirit. I do not believe that, judging by Paul's frankly critical attitude towards all over-powering religious emotion, he would have understood any human analogies of love or friendship as interpretations of his " union " with Christ. The inward relationship, the being " in Christ," is

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clearly open to all, and is indeed a synonym for being a Christian. He has no idea that it is dependent upon temperamental conditions. The formula "in Christ" is frequently used in connections that exclude the idea of a tense emotional state or of any mystical absorption.<sup>1</sup> "In Christ" expresses the source of will and activity in general (Phil. iv. 13); the atmosphere of mental judgment and modes of conduct (Romans xiv. 14; 1 Cor. iv. 17); the stay in suffering (2 Cor. xiii. 4); the spring of joy (Phil. iv. 10); the source of love to men (2 Cor. v. 4); of longing and pity (Phil. i. 8); of truth and sincerity (2 Cor. xi. 10; Romans ix. 1).

2. This question of Paul's mysticism may also be suggestively treated in connection with *his attitude towards the ecstatic phenomena, produced by the Spirit*, in such a community as the Christian Church at Corinth (1 Cor. xii. 1ff). These phenomena were evidently of a very varied character, physical, intellectual, moral, and religious. Paul was clearly conscious that in himself were united, in a remarkable degree, these "gifts" of the Spirit that are enumerated,<sup>2</sup> apart from those of a more pronouncedly ecstatic character, which he also shared. There can be no doubt, also, that Paul identifies completely the being "in Christ," and being "in the Spirit," so far as his own religious experience was concerned. Theologically, it may be possible to separate the two, and it is convenient and necessary to do so, chiefly that due weight may be given to Paul's view of the person of Christ. It is theologically misleading simply to identify as objective facts, the risen Christ and the Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit of God, bestowed through

<sup>1</sup> cf. J. Weiss, "Urchristenthum," p. 359.

<sup>2</sup> e.g., 1 Cor. iii. 5, Gal. i. 1, 2. Cor. xiii. 3, Rom. xv. 18, 29.

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the risen Christ. This is Paul's distinctive contribution to New Testament thought on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

It is permissible to regard these spiritual phenomena at Corinth as at least containing the raw material of "mysticism." At the same time it has to be remembered that they are often present where there exists any extraordinary state of spiritual ferment, such as a religious revival. There is always a tendency to regard them as exclusively representing the kind of experience that denotes true knowledge of God. Thus they come to be regarded as "mystical." What then is Paul's attitude towards these phenomena? It may be described in Wernle's phrase as "the subordination of mysticism."<sup>2</sup> Doubtless the manifestations at Corinth were connected with the ordinary Messianic expectations, which characterised the primitive preaching. The Spirit was the sign of the new Messianic age, according to prophecy (Acts ii. 17ff). Paul's original contribution to Christian thought on the subject is very marked, and is in a direction that tends to "subordinate mysticism" to the more permanent phenomena of the ordinary Christian life. The same tendency is seen in the Thessalonian letters, in his emphasis on the dignity of labour and the value of conduct, in presence of the disturbing effects produced by an immediate expectation of the Second Advent (I. iv. 10ff; v. 6-10, II. ii. 1-3, iii. 6, iii. 10-13, Moffatt's translation).

Paul's contribution to the subject may be thus summarised:—

(1) *He makes no distinction between what are called the "gifts" of the Spirit, and the ordinary graces of the Christian life.* There was an undoubted

<sup>1</sup> cf. D. Somerville, "St. Paul's Conception of Christ," pp. 113ff.

<sup>2</sup> See P. Wernle, "The Beginnings of Christianity," I. pp. 254ff.

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tendency in the primitive Church to exalt the "gifts," especially those of a pronouncedly ecstatic character, to a place of undue prominence and importance. Paul lays down the principle that every "gift" must be employed for the good of the whole, in love; that tongues and prophesying must be interpreted, and their meaning made accessible to the ordinary person; that there are "ordinary" people with ordinary gifts and capacities in the Christian Church, who are also "spirit-filled" men (1 Cor. xii. 29-30). In this connection his parable of the body and its members is eloquent (1 Cor. xii. 12-26). The classical utterance of his meaning is Gal. v. 22. All religious experiences of whatever kind are known and tested by their ethical fruits. The "Spirit" is really Paul's comprehensive term for the sum of religious experiences. To say, as Paul does, that the whole Christian life is spiritual, and spiritually conditioned, is an epoch-making advance on the thought of his time. It means that the most wonderful thing in Christianity is the miracle of the Christian personality, and goes far to break down any purely formal distinctions between sacred and secular. It really underlies the conception that all who have made the Christian profession, and become members of the Christian community, are "saints."

(2) *Paul identifies the Spirit, which is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ* (Romans viii. 9, 14; Gal. iv. 6). The primitive Messianic view in the Christian Church was that the Spirit was given through Christ—a substitute, as it were, for His presence, "until He come," and a token of the advent of His Kingdom. Paul first brings the "Spirit" into line with the Jesus of history, a process which was completed in the Fourth Gospel. Thereby the Spirit is prevented from becoming a

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mere vague influence of God ; and by the identification with Christ, the God whose Spirit it is, is defined. When Paul makes this identification, he is not diluting the idea of Christ into something impersonal and abstract. That would have been impossible to Paul, who had seen Him. He is not moving in the direction of mysticism, but away from it. What he does really is to Christianise the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Jesus is at once the perfect embodiment, the only channel, and the only source of the Spirit. "By drawing close the bond between the gift and the person, and identifying the Spirit of God with the energy of the personal life of Jesus, Paul furnished a test by which phenomena really due to the divine Spirit might be discriminated from others that did not proceed from that source. For what comes from the Spirit of God must authenticate itself as such by its being in harmony with the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit exhibited in the character and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>2</sup>

Incidentally it may be remarked that this identification indicates a very real knowledge on Paul's part of the earthly life and character of Jesus. He does much more than simply equate two kinds of transcendental experience, the Spirit and the risen Christ, in the heart of the Christian. That would simply be tautology. The impress of Paul's individuality is seen in his emphasis on this inalienable connection between the Christ of history and the Christ of experience. No conception is more meaningless as a guide to the interpretation of New Testament thought, than the alternative, "Jesus or Christ." It is a striking fact that Paul, who in all probability had never seen Jesus in the flesh, should thus have been the first to recall the Church to the importance of historical fact.

<sup>1</sup> P. Wernle, *op. cit.* I., 265.

<sup>2</sup> D. Somerville, *op. cit.* p. 117.



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(3) At the same time, *this is not in order to recall Christians to the past, but to remind them of the significance of the present. He does not ask them to remember, but to realise.* The living Jesus is present in the Spirit in His Church. This is the true significance of the term "body of Christ" as applied to the Church (1 Cor. xii. 27). The community, and not the individual is the "body" of Christ. No apter word could have been chosen than "body," which already had the significance of a community, and at the same time expressed the sense of the personal presence of Jesus with His Church. Other terms in this connection applied to the community, are "epistle" (2 Cor. iii. 3)—"You are a letter of Christ, which I have been employed to write"; "mirror" (2 Cor. iii. 18); "temple" (1 Cor. iii. 16), with special reference to sectarianism. As has already been pointed out, the conception of the "indwelling Christ" applied to the individual must be approached from this point of view. The union of the Christian with Christ is not primarily a union of the individual soul with Christ, but an organic unity of all believers with Christ. The individual cannot develop his real personality without others, and he cannot enter into living union with Christ without others.<sup>1</sup> The stirring of the new life, the new moral energy within them, the absence of fear, are the outcome of the personal energy of the exalted Christ in the members of His body. It is hardly conceivable that Paul should have regarded it as an adequate expression of his meaning, that the risen Christ should dwell within the heart of a single individual, as a kind of second self. The gift of the risen Christ needs more than one pair of hands to receive it, and more than one heart to manifest its full power, and adequately

<sup>1</sup> cf. W. R. Inge, *op. cit.* p. 68.

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to express our sense of wonder and adoration. It is a social gift. "We comprehend with all saints the length and breadth, and height and depth of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." It is not to be denied that a real religious life may be present, and in certain expressions of it, can only be present, in a single detached and solitary experience. Yet it cannot be over-emphasised that from the New Testament point of view, pure individualism in religion is a maimed and broken type. Christianity needs and demands channels of expression, both spiritual, moral, and intellectual, which the "Church" alone can give. The bond that unites us is an individual sense of what Christ has done, and is doing for us; and when men are as deeply touched by Christ as the Christians of the New Testament, they find themselves wonderfully alike, beneath all the individual forms of outward expression. All great emotions have this unifying tendency. A common sorrow unites men; much more the experience of a common "salvation" in the New Testament sense.

4. *When Paul seeks to check the antinomian influences of the gospel of the grace of God, it is to the "Lordship" of Jesus that he appeals.* "Lord" is no mystical term. "The Lord is the Spirit." We have already seen in the preceding chapter, how he "personalises" the relationship with Jesus Christ, when ethical questions of the kind arise. For him, Jesus' Lordship is the outgrowth of His historic life (Phil. ii. 7-10). The path of humiliation and self-abnegation that led to it, is the supreme ethical example. The secret of Lordship is obedience. Sometimes, instead of emphasising the "Lord," he emphasises the "kingdom" of which He is Lord, and for a similar ethical purpose. "Our citizenship is in heaven"

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(Phil. iii. 20). While it cannot be denied that Paul possesses, among other endowments, the mystical temperament, it is extremely striking to note that he is fully alive to its dangers, and that his message, in its essence, requires no mystical temperament in order to understand and to receive it. The power of his individuality is most clearly felt in this "subordination of mysticism."

3. There is, however, a whole group of ideas in Paul's thought, which at first sight can only be interpreted in a mystical sense. He speaks of "dying with Christ;" being "buried with Him in baptism;" being "crucified with Christ."

"Wherever I go, I carry about in my body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in my body. Every day of my life I am a prey to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in my mortal flesh" (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11).

His interpretation of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper also belongs to this group of ideas, but the consideration of these demands a special chapter.

The question is acute at the present day, as to Paul's relationship with the mystery-religions. Space entirely forbids any really adequate treatment of the matter here. The English reader must be referred to the writings of Dr. P. Gardner<sup>1</sup> or Dr. Kirsopp Lake,<sup>2</sup> both convinced exponents of the point of view which emphasises the influence of mystery ideas on Paul's thought. A balanced and to my mind conclusive judgment on the whole matter is contained in Dr. Kennedy's "St. Paul and the Mystery-religions," the only work of the kind in English. There full references will be found to the

<sup>1</sup> "The Religious Experience of St. Paul."

<sup>2</sup> "The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul."

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German and French literature on the subject. It is a matter for deep regret that the masterly little work of A. Jacoby, "*Die Antiken Mysterienreligionen und das Christenthum*," has not yet found a translator.

What are the mystery-religions? Briefly they may be defined as an extraordinary spiritual result of the conquests of Alexander the Great. In his train, there were let loose upon the Græco-Roman world an extraordinary variety of religious influences. His world-wide conquests had opened up roads along which there travelled a strange medley of religious ideas from Egypt, Persia, Phrygia, India. The prevailing type of thought in the Roman world was Greek. The general type of popular religion in cities like Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Colossae, where it was not Diaspora Judaism, was Greek, or more correctly, Hellenistic. In other words, it was an amazing blend of Eastern and Western religious thought. The Greek mythology had fallen before the corroding influences of Greek philosophy. Plato, for example, sweeps away the stories of the Olympian gods on the ground that many of them are immoral. In Paul's day, Greek thought was dominated by Stoicism, which made more appeal to popular sentiment and ordinary human instinct than Epicureanism, its rival system. Yet, as the old gods went, new gods arrived. No philosophy can be a perfect substitute for religion. Professor Gilbert Murray compares the philosophy of the time to the flowers in our garden, and the religion to the weeds, and adds, "The flowers we keep alive with difficulty; the weeds are what conquer us."<sup>1</sup> In this case the "weeds" did conquer. Amid the general sense of the insecurity of human life, following on military conquest and military

<sup>1</sup> "Four Stages of Greek Religion," p. 109.

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despotism; the decay of the religion of the Greek *polis*, the independent city-state; the growing spirit of cosmopolitanism that went hand in hand with the growth of the Roman Empire,<sup>1</sup> and made men feel what the socialist of to-day calls "The International," the human individual began to feel himself alone, so far as the deepest religious instincts of his nature were concerned. It has to be remembered that probably at no time in the world's history was the religious instinct stronger, and religion less dogmatic than at the beginnings of the Christian era. Religions as well as nations and races were blended. Men were seeking after an unknown God, if haply they might find Him. Plato, long before, had banished God from the material world, and men felt that if they were to find Him, they must strain beyond the life of the senses, and detach themselves from the clogging sensations of the body. There is, of course, an inscrutable element in all this strange mood. It can only be explained as a *preparatio evangelica*. It was the "fulness of time," not only in Judæa, but in the whole Græco-Roman world. Men spoke of the "Divine," not of God; for the Greek *theos* was an extraordinarily fluid conception. It simply stood for "immortal being."<sup>2</sup> The Divine was a mystery, and union with the Divine meant, becoming a "god," i.e., immortal. It meant "salvation." It could only be achieved by "initiation," a "new birth." At the same time popular religion demanded something more real and tangible than simply a vague conception of the Divine. This was supplied by the return of the old Greek gods, by the coming of many gods

<sup>1</sup> An example of this cosmopolitanism is found in the fact that Paul, the Jew of Tarsus, is a Roman citizen.

<sup>2</sup> W. R. Inge, "Christian Mysticism," pp. 356 f.

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with Eastern names, by the personalising of the processes of nature, of fate, of the stars.

These "mystery-religions" of which we speak, provided rites, and in their simplified form as Hermetic religions, sacred spells. Through these, men might become identified in mystic fashion with the particular god whom they worshipped. It has to be remembered that the system was not really polytheistic, but monotheistic. The separate gods whose names we have—Isis, Serapis, etc.—were really manifestations of the one divine principle. They seem to have occupied much the same position as the "saints" in Roman Catholic worship. The main thing for men was to become "deified," to receive, by the observance of certain rites and lustral practices, the seed of the divine immortality within their being. The religious life of the time was honeycombed with secret societies, each devoted to the worship of particular deities. Doubtless there was a good deal that was unethical, and actually impure, connected with the mystery-worship among these coteries or brotherhoods. It is, however, equally certain that the mystery-worship was in the main sincere, and, ideally at least, implied moral regeneration.<sup>1</sup>

When Paul carried his gospel to the Gentile world, one can easily see how "a great door and effectual" was open to him. He came with the message of a God—"one God"—who *offered* to men the "mystery" of His love, and union with Himself, irrespective of their intellectual or moral attainments. Many would look upon the "brotherhood" of Jesus, as though He were some new divinity (Acts xvii. 18ff.). Paul ever seeks to turn men from "idols," to serve the living God. The situation, both in Jewish and in pagan religious thought, would give

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Inge, *op. cit.* p. 354.



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Paul the opportunity for the exercise of that missionary genius which undoubtedly he possessed in special measure ; for conviction and fervour are not the only equipment a missionary must possess. In many respects Paul was eminently endowed with the qualities that were necessary. His own knowledge of Judaism and his subsequent breach with it, at a stroke, gave him a message which both enabled him to meet the arguments and intrigues of Judaising opponents, and to retain all that was permanent in Jewish thought. His training under Gamaliel, who favoured Greek culture, must have familiarised him with Greek thought, and perhaps it was only when he became a Christian missionary that he realised the value of Gamaliel's tolerant teaching. Moreover, the mystical strain in his own temperament, although essentially Jewish, would enable him at least to understand mystics all the world over, and to sympathise with their strivings after good. He had learned, as he says, in 1 Cor. ix. 19, 22, to become "all things to all men, if by any means he might save some." It would be wrong to regard such an utterance as indicating a spirit of conscious compromise and accommodation. There may have been moments when Paul did compromise deliberately, as when he circumcised Timothy (Acts xvi. 3), or took vows in the Temple (Acts xxi. 23ff.) ; in the second instance, at least, the compromise was attended with no great success, as it deserved to be. In other cases, he deliberately adopted the religious language of his converts. On the other hand, it has to be remembered that religious habits persist with extraordinary pertinacity. Paul was to the end a Jew. The marvel is that, with his Jewish convictions and strong sense of nationality, he was enabled to state so clearly the complete abrogation of the Jewish dispensation.

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Yet dead leaves fall off the tree gradually, or are swept away by the wind ; they are not rudely torn off by the hand of man. Paul continues to observe the Law in certain aspects, as for example the hastening of his journey in Acts xx. 16, in order to be at Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. Similarly his own mystical temperament would lead him not only to sympathise with, but even to adopt, with greater ease than most, the terminology of those Græco-Roman mystics whom he encountered in his missionary preaching. We know how often the missionary has to adopt the language and habits of thinking of those whom he evangelises, in order to make the Christian gospel and the Christian Scriptures intelligible to them. Did Paul do so in the case of the language of the mystery-religions ? One passage in his letters is particularly full of interest in this connection—I Cor. ii. 1-iii. 2. These verses are sprinkled throughout with "mystery" expressions: "wisdom"<sup>1</sup>; "mystery"<sup>2</sup>; "word"<sup>3</sup>; "spirit"<sup>4</sup>; "faith"<sup>5</sup>; "power"<sup>6</sup>; "perfect"<sup>7</sup> (really "of mature experience"; in mystery-language "the fully initiated"); "glory"<sup>8</sup>; "spiritual"<sup>9</sup>; "natural"<sup>10</sup>; "mind"<sup>11</sup>; "babe"<sup>12</sup>; "milk"<sup>13</sup>. The writing is addressed to Corinth, a town which by its peculiar situation, and by reason of its two ports, was particularly open to all the varied influences that were at work in the Hellenistic world. Besides the remarkable grouping of words in this Corinthian passage, we have several other isolated ideas and terms of the "mystery" type, *e.g.*, "salvation," "enlighten," "knowledge."<sup>14</sup> We speak in this connection of "mystery" religion, as though it were

<sup>1</sup> σοφία, <sup>2</sup> μυστήριον, <sup>3</sup> λόγος, <sup>4</sup> πνεῦμα, <sup>5</sup> πίστις, <sup>6</sup> δύναμις, <sup>7</sup> τέλειος, <sup>8</sup> δόξα, <sup>9</sup> πνευματικός, <sup>10</sup> ψυχικός, <sup>11</sup> νοῦς, <sup>12</sup> νήπιος, <sup>13</sup> γαλα. See the Greek index in Reitzenstein's "Die Hellenistischen Mysterien-religionen," and his discussion of these words.

<sup>14</sup> σωτηρία, φωτίζειν, γνῶσις.

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a strictly defined and well ascertained type of religious thought. As a matter of fact, very little that is definite is known of these cults. They blended even with Jewish ideas, and in some cases Christian influence may also be presumed.

One thing, however, is certain, and must now be reckoned with in any adequate treatment of Paul's thought. There undoubtedly existed a vocabulary of mystical religious terms. These would be quite intelligible to those to whom Paul spoke in Antioch, Corinth, or Ephesus, and it is equally certain that Paul, at times, adopts this vocabulary. For example, to take one of the most striking instances, the worshipper who has entered upon the first stage of initiation into the Attis-mystery, *i.e.*, who has been "born again," is actually fed with milk as though he were a young child, on his way to become a man, one who is "grown up."<sup>1</sup> It is striking that Paul should speak in similar terms of his Corinthian converts, who were by no means "mature" in Christian knowledge and experience (1 Cor. iii. 1f). This coincidence of thought may be made a test-case for our purpose. Like any other efficient missionary, Paul adopts a terminology familiar to his hearers. That does not mean that he also adopts and approves the ideas which it expresses—a most important distinction.<sup>2</sup>

Again we may take the general conception of "salvation." "Salvation" in Hellenistic mystery thought represented a very real yearning of humanity. Yet there is an important difference between Paul's use of the term, and its Hellenistic usage. In order to be "saved," the mystery-worshipper conceives himself as actually requiring to be freed from the "body," in order that his

<sup>1</sup> "Mature." See above, and R. Reitzenstein, *op. cit.* p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

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"soul" the divine essence within him, may receive into itself some "medicine of immortality." The actual divine essence of the "god" passes over into his being. He is on the way to be "deified," absorbed into the personality of the god, if it is allowable to speak of personality at all in connection with such a vague conception as the Hellenistic *theos*. The fact that the idea is wholly materialistic does not exclude the possibility of certain definite ethical results, of "deification" which might be good or bad. Now, surely no one can seriously contend that Paul means by his conception of the indwelling Christ or the indwelling Spirit, that a vague divine essence actually passes from the Christ to the soul of the Christian believer, making him a "spiritual man." We have already seen that Paul lays great stress on "the flesh," or a bodily organism, as an inseparable and real element in personality, both here and hereafter. The Christian life is lived "in the flesh," and the bond that unites the believer with Christ is one of grateful love. There is also a resurrection body. There are passages like 2 Cor. iii. 18, where Paul speaks of the believer as being "transformed"<sup>1</sup>—another "mystery" term—into the image of Christ, by "beholding" Him. It is indeed "glory," that passes over from Christ to the believer, but it is used in an ethical sense. There is no idea of the substance of Christ's "light-body" passing into the body of the believer. Paul always thinks of his gospel in terms of power, and not of substance.

At the same time, it must be conceded that even in Hebrew thought the "spirit" is conceived, especially in its earlier stages, as a "substance." As the ethical deepening of religion increased, the conception of the "power" of the Spirit of God

<sup>1</sup> μεταμορφῶσθαι.

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comes to drive into the background the idea of an imparted substance. It may be useful to quote the following from Dr. Kennedy's work already referred to, as it gives expression to a point of view that is undeniable:—"We should frankly admit that the processes of ancient psychology are so far removed from our habits of thought that it is unsafe to deny the survival of realistic notions side by side with such profoundly ethical conceptions as those most prominent in Paul's use of *spirit*. We must recognise that he lived in an atmosphere in which everything causal was regarded as substantial, in which "force" and "body" constitute no antithesis."<sup>1</sup>

When Paul speaks of "dying with Christ," or "being crucified with Christ," he is undoubtedly using language that would convey a certain familiar meaning to those who heard it. For example, in the Attis-mystery, which really arises out of a more ancient spring-festival, at one stage the death and resurrection of Attis are represented. A tree, bound like a corpse and adorned with garlands, is buried within the temple precincts. On the day appointed, before the assembled worshippers or "initiates," the grave is opened; a light is brought in; and the priest anoints the neck of each worshipper with a sweet-smelling oil. As he does so, he whispers in his ear in mysterious fashion, "Be of good cheer, Mystae, the god has been saved, and for us also shall there be salvation from peril of death."<sup>2</sup> Paul's phrase, "baptised into His death" may at least have recalled such conceptions to the minds of his readers. More will be said of this in the chapter that follows on the Sacraments. At the same time, it is simply caricaturing his thought to assert that the conception

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. A. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, 91; R. Reitzenstein, *op. cit.*, 52.

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underlying is analogous to that of the death of the mystery-god. It is very misleading to isolate single expressions of Paul's in this way. His whole conception of Jesus is framed on a different model, as compared with the mystery-deities. One passage in particular (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11), usually classed with the other so-called "mystical" utterances on the Death of Jesus, can be explained without any mystical interpretation whatever :—  
"Wherever I go, I carry about in my body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in my body. Every day of my life, I am a prey to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in my mortal flesh."

Surely all who suffer and die in the faith of Jesus, can express as sheer matter of fact and as demonstrable truth, that only in the Cross of Christ do they find the ultimate assurance of "dying to live." And Paul is thinking of his own pains, anxieties, and vicissitudes. He knows they are gradually killing him. Jesus had thus spent Himself. The parallel struck him, as it has struck many a believer since, between his own experience and that of Jesus. Over against the discouraging and depressing—it may be terrifying—fact of decaying vitality, he sees the Cross of Christ, the dying of Jesus. It means for him, in a language clearer than the language of his own bodily suffering, a demonstration of the love of God, that is also life. Jesus who so died is also alive. The life of Jesus is coming "out" as it were in his mortal body. As he says in another place, "his inward man is being renewed day by day." His escapes and renewals of strength, his courage and hope, the fresh opportunities that each day brings, are as it were "a series of resurrections."<sup>1</sup> They are a witness

<sup>1</sup> Denney, "Expositor's Bible," 2 Cor. p.



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to himself and to others of the power of the risen Christ. Paul's so-called "Spirit- and Christ-mysticism" can be explained only in terms of his experience on the Damascus road, and also it may be added, in terms of that experience as interpreted and enriched by his life in the Christian community. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me," is a description of the conversion experience by one who has already shared in the spiritual experiences of the Christian Church. The real word for Paul's relationship to the risen Christ is "faith"—"faith in the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." "This is a faith which has behind it the force of an all-subduing love. The emotion is the response to the redeeming love of the Cross, the most tremendous moral power with which Paul has ever come in contact."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. A. A. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, pp. 289 ; see also pp. 284-293 .

## XV

### THE SACRAMENTS

THE individuality of Paul's teaching, particularly regarding the Christian Sacraments, requires to be defended against the tendency to regard it as entirely moulded by conceptions derived from the contemporary mystery-religion. On no topic is Paul's doctrine less formal and dogmatic than his doctrine of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In Romans, for example, where his Christian teaching is more systematised than anywhere else in his writing, there is only one reference to Baptism, and none at all to the Lord's Supper. Moreover, it is safe to say that, to a mind like Paul's, the insistence on ritual *quâ* ritual was completely foreign, just as it was foreign to the mind of Jesus. Paul's conception of the Church as the body of Christ is the fruit of experience, and a statement of the fact that Jesus lives and reigns in the hearts of His "saints;" he never occupies himself with the Church as an institution possessing a certain ordered hierarchy. This is the main reason why the Pastoral Epistles must be rejected as Pauline in the form in which we have them. The Pauline Church is a collection of "outposts" of heaven, waiting for the coming of their Lord from heaven. He is much more concerned that the Church should be true and loyal in spirit and life to its Lord, than that it should have correct institutions. The kingdom of God is not based on an outward

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and material order. It is not "eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). Paul does care for organisation, as we shall see; but his organising ability is directed towards the guidance and restraint of certain elemental religious forces, that might, if left to themselves, be volcanic and sometimes revolutionary in their character. It was and is a mark of the Christian Church from the very beginning that it strives to burst the human bonds that are necessary to its efficiency, tugs and strains at the moorings that bind it to the shores of this life. The absence of this *ripae ulterioris amor*, in the Church of any age, is a sign not of ordered life, but of spiritual death.

Paul found the Sacraments already existing in the Christian Church. He did not invent them or institute them. Let us examine some of his references to them.

## I.—BAPTISM.

Four principal passages may be isolated.

1. "Ye are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. As many as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ as a garment" (Gal. iii. 26, 27).

2. "By one spirit we have all been baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and we have all drunk of one spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

3. "Are ye ignorant that as many as have been baptised into Christ Jesus, have been baptised into His death? We have been buried with Him through baptism into His death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, so we also might live our lives in newness of life" (Romans vi. 3 f.).

4. "Buried with Him in baptism, ye were thereby raised with Him, according to the measure

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of your faith in the energy of God who raised Him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12).

Two questions emerge in connection with these passages.

1. What is the connection between the Spirit and Baptism?

2. What is the connection between Baptism and the Death of Jesus?

1. *Baptism and the Spirit*.—Paul certainly teaches that Baptism implies the communication of the Spirit to the individual. Otherwise it would be a barren rite. He does not on that account mean that the act of submission to Baptism synchronises with the reception of the Spirit, or alone makes it possible. Baptism by immersion was the symbolic rite of admission to the Christian Church, performed in the case of those whose hearts God's Spirit had already touched. Only adult baptism, of course, is in view. In these days, no motive but a real one was conceivable as influencing those who made a Christian profession. They felt themselves drawn to one another by the common experience of the Spirit, and submission to baptism was the recognition of this fact, by themselves and by the community. Baptism does not confer any additional grace, or operate in any magical way. Strong emphasis is laid upon the moral responsibility attaching to the Sacrament. "As many of you as were baptised into Christ, put on Christ as a garment."<sup>1</sup> "To put on Christ" is to appear before all the world as a Christian, to behave as a Christian should, as representing Christ before

<sup>1</sup> Zahn, "Komm. zum Neuen Testament," Gal. iii. 27, quotes Dion. Hal. xi. 5 Τὸν Ταρκύνιον ἐκεῖνον ἐνδύεσθαι—"he behaved as a despot like Tarquin," *lit.* "put on Tarquin." *Ἐνδύεσθαι* seems also to have been used in Mystery terminology (Luc. Somn. 19); the above is a good illustration of the way in which Paul adopts and adapts the vocabulary.

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men. Always when Paul speaks of Baptism, he has an ethical end in view. Here it is a motive for the recognition of Christian freedom and equality. In Romans vi. 1ff., it is a motive for the maintenance of a high moral standard. In 1 Cor. vi. 11, Baptism means separation from one world and identification with another; this, in view of the tendency in Corinth to litigation in heathen law-courts. Baptism always presupposes faith.

2. *Baptism and the Death of Jesus.*—The third and fourth passages quoted above contain this thought. It has to be noted, however, that the greater portion of Paul's references to the Death of Jesus have no connection with Baptism at all. This ought to guide us as to the meaning when baptism is mentioned in conjunction with the Death of Jesus, and to prevent our attaching any mystical meaning to these passages. In Romans vi. 8, Paul speaks of dying "with Christ"; in Gal. ii. 20 he says, "I have been crucified with Christ." The passage where he speaks of "bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus," has already been explained" (pp. 249f). The truth seems to be that the outward ritual of baptism by immersion—the disappearance under the water, and the emergence from it—laid hold of Paul's imagination, and was used as a symbol to convey what the Death and Resurrection of Jesus meant for every believer. We must guard against any isolated and atomistic treatment of such language as "buried with Him through baptism into His death." What that means must be explained by other passages. "Whatever be the significance of baptism for Paul . . . when he speaks of the believer as 'dying with Christ,' he has the quite definite idea of identification with the relation toward sin of the crucified Redeemer, the identi-

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fication which he sums up in the memorable words of Phil. iii. 10."<sup>1</sup> Moffatt translates the expression just quoted, "with my nature transformed to die as He died." Paul means by "dying with Christ," dying to sin as Christ died; by being "crucified with Christ," dying to the Law. Death annuls all obligations and clears off all scores, so far as sin and the Law are concerned. Their authority over us is dead. Just as Adam's sin involved all his descendants in bondage to sin, so Christ's one great act of death broke the bondage and involved all men in the same freedom. How Adam's sin actually involves those who come after him, Paul never explains. In some fashion or other Adam is the representative of humanity, and it has to be remembered that Paul speaks also of men, by their own act, involving themselves. "Death came upon all men inasmuch as all men sinned . . . . From Adam to Moses death reigned even over those who did not sin as Adam sinned" (Romans v. 14). Here we have a peculiar Hebrew turn of thought which to our minds is still obscure. The thought that "all men sinned," in other words are responsible for their own transgression, is crossed by another which involves a transcendent view of the unity of the race in Adam.<sup>2</sup> The notion, if it is Paul's, that somehow or other Adam's guilt involves ours, can make no appeal to our minds. The main fact is that the reign and doom of death, the wages of sin, are no more, through Christ's Death. Baptism is not only the recognition, but the symbolic representation for Christian faith of this achievement.

To die with Christ, is to live with Him; Paul never thinks of the Death of Jesus apart from

<sup>1</sup> H. A. A. Kennedy, *op. cit.* p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Denney, "Expositor's Greek Testament," *in. loc.*



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the Resurrection. We are baptised "into Christ." We share His triumphant life, which He lives now. As always, the bond that unites us to Him is a bond of gratitude. "Baptised into His death" means above all else, that Paul is conscious that he has been, as it were, submerged by a great divine stream of dying love. The sense of repulsion that is sometimes felt at the sound of such phrases as "washed in the blood of the Lamb" is largely due to our inability to recognise the real shame and horror of the crucifixion. No phrase that Paul uses of the Death of Christ makes us realise more the tremendous change of attitude that took place within him towards the Cross, than this one, "baptised into His death." Perhaps, in these times of carnage, some of us are realising the full force of what it means to be "baptised into" the death of those who have died for us. Their blood is our life, and it is a life that ought never to be the same again, but loftier in aim and worthier in content. These sacramental acts of our brethren recall us to one aspect of the Great Sacrifice. The Cross "commends," demonstrates the love of God; the Resurrection manifests the "glorious power" of God, through which it is accomplished. When Paul wishes to express the power of God in its fullest strength, as the Christian's heritage and dynamic for the new life, he says, "according to the power of Him who raised Jesus from the dead."

Thus the sacrament of Baptism for Paul, as for most Christians, does not excite to one train of thought, and one stereotyped experience alone. The use of the symbolic and sacramental in religion is that it leaves the mind and will free to operate. It effects no *opus operatum*, such as the bestowal of the Spirit. The conception of Baptism would, however, be incomplete without our recognising

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that it is, in Paul's view, more than symbolic. It does mean identification with the "body," "the brotherhood," the Church of Christ. "We have all been baptised into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). Identification with the Christian brotherhood involved a really new spiritual experience. It meant a new spiritual crisis when the believer deliberately turned his back on old associations, and incurred costly sacrifice. By this step, he acknowledged his utter and entire dependence on God's grace and power. "In baptism (of course adult) something happened. Faith had been there before, receptiveness toward the good news of Christ. The divine Spirit had been already present, taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to the believer. But now, once for all, the convert makes his own the movings of the divine love in his heart."<sup>1</sup> In other words, he gets no other thing in the sacrament that he did not get in the word, but his receptiveness is increased. The Christian view of the Sacraments has never been more tersely or clearly put than in the words of the ancient Scottish divine, Robert Bruce:—

"Then, speers thou, quhat new thing we get? I say we get this new thing,—we get Christ better than we did before; we get the thing that we gat mair fullie, that is, with a surer apprehension nor we had of it before; we get a better grip of Christ now; for by the sacrament my faith is nurished, the bounds of my saull is enlarged, and sa, quhere I had but a little grip of Christ before, as it were betwixt my finger and my thumb, now I get Him in my haill hande; and ay the mair that my faith growes, the better grip I get of Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

It is to Paul that we really owe the view of the

<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> Sermons, 1590. Woodrow Society's Edition, pp. 49, 50.

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Sacraments that they are the act of the whole Church, mediated to the individual through the act of a Christian minister, who is another individual set apart, in the interests of order, for that purpose. Paul was the first to oppose any priestly conception of the priest's office. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptised into the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. i. 13). Baptism is an aspect of the preaching of the Gospel. It is a gospel, and carries moral responsibility for those who receive it. "Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel" (*ib.* i. 17).

## II.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Clearly Paul found the Lord's Supper already an institution in the Christian Church. 1 Cor. xi. 23, does not mean that Paul had a special revelation on the matter, or that he instituted it. He emphasises that what he communicated to them was authentic, and whatever the medium through which the facts were obtained, came "from the Lord." Paul did not come to the knowledge of the facts of Jesus' life, or of His sayings in any miraculous way. The pregnant phrase "on the night in which He was being betrayed"—while the very betrayal was going on—"Jesus took bread," suggests that the historical setting of the Supper had made a deep impression on Paul's mind. They are a symbol of the fact that He was "made sin for us," who knew "no sin." Also Paul here indicates clearly that he does not regard the mind of Christ as foreign to the sacramental idea. That is an unwarrantable supposition, and would endanger the true humanity of Jesus. The "sacramental" and the symbolic are permanent human forms of expression, calculated to meet permanent human needs. There are moments in life when words fail

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or are useless. A gift, a handshake, a look, a memorial are alone required and understood. On that night, Jesus was face to face with the fact that His words had failed to convey to the minds of His disciples the necessity and significance of His death. Baffled in speech, with all that His life meant still unexpressed and unappropriated, He made use of these deathless symbols. It is not the correctness of the ritual, surely, with which Paul is concerned when he says that it is "from the Lord." He occupies himself and would have the Corinthians occupy themselves, with the content of the ritual, and its meaning for the mind of Jesus, in view of the prevailing abuses of the Supper. They must avoid "eating and drinking unworthily;" they must "discern the Lord's body," discriminating this feast from all other eating and drinking.<sup>1</sup>

For a discussion of the supposed bearing of mystery sacramental meals on the Pauline view of the Lord's Supper, the English reader must be referred to Kennedy (*op. cit.*, 256ff). Here we can only briefly consider the bearing of three passages in 1 Corinthians, the only passages in Paul's writings where direct reference is made to the Lord's Supper. These are:—

(1) 1 Cor. x. 1-5.

(2) 1 Cor. x. 14-22.

(3) 1 Cor. xi. 17-34.

(1) Paul is here making use of certain Haggadistic

<sup>1</sup> "The members of the Christian Community in Corinth assembled together in one place, where they ate together a meal which they themselves provided; and this meeting ended with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Holy Supper was the essential part. The common meal and what belonged to it were accessories, the casket to contain the one precious jewel, the body to be vivified by His soul. It was the Holy Supper that really brought them together; but their conduct had made it impossible for them to be the Lord's guests at His table."—T. M. Lindsay, "The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries," p. 51.

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interpretations of incidents connected with the wilderness-journey. Here, again, we must be careful to take the passage in its context. The context begins with the words of ix. 27. Paul is himself conscious of the danger that threatened himself, should life and preaching not correspond. He seeks to point out that the same doom overtook the Old Testament Church, notwithstanding that they had received God's signal act of salvation in the deliverance from Egypt, had professed their loyalty to Moses—were "baptised into Moses"—and had been nourished with divine nourishment. The vividness of the picture is great. We see all these bodies, "full-fed with miraculous nourishment, strewing the soil of the desert" (Godet). Few entered the Promised Land (v. 5). Certain considerations require to be kept in view for the purpose of interpreting the passage aright.

(a) It is more than probable that Paul is meeting an antinomian and magical view of the Supper, existing in Corinth. The Greek mind would be particularly open, in the *milieu* of mystery religious thought, to regard the eating of the sacred meal, as in itself guaranteeing the required result. Paul combats this view by giving them a picture from the sacred history, of God's people, miraculously guided and nourished, yet corpses in the desert and slain by the judgment of God.

(b) Paul's audience must be regarded as composed both of Jews and of Greeks. The population of Corinth was a very mixed one. Already, before Paul came, the Jewish synagogues would be a centre of Jewish propaganda. Diaspora Judaism, in practice and thought, would tend to take up into itself some of the baser elements of Greek thought. Hence the appeal to Old Testament history was made on familiar ground.

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(c) Does Paul himself adopt the Haggadistic view of the history contained in vv. 1-5? He speaks of the "cloud" and the passing through the sea as a "baptism." In the act they committed themselves to the guidance of Moses. "They were baptised into Moses." The manna and the waters of Rephidim (Exodus xvi. 13ff.; 17), and the waters of Kadesh (Num. xx.), are described as "spiritual" food and drink. He makes use of the Rabbinical legend that the water-bearing rock journeyed onwards with the Israelites, and that it was identical with the Messiah. "That rock was Christ." The absurdity of the conception to our minds is no proof that Paul did not hold it, as a Haggadistic allegory. Does "spiritual" meat and drink, however, mean more than simply that God gave it? The analogy of the "spiritual body" would seem to indicate that not only do they come from God, but that in their essence they have miraculous properties. What is really Paul's view? It is not easy to say what any man's views are on matters of fact lying behind the content of allegorical speculation. It may be suggested, however, that the Corinthians would interpret "spiritual" as meaning that a certain divine essence was communicated through the manna and the water, which might have been expected to guarantee immunity from sin and its penalty. Paul adopts this point of view, and says, "Very well. It was not so then. It is not so now. Communion with Christ in the sacrament does not secure to you freedom to hold, with impunity, communion with a demon in a heathen temple." Even to-day, in sacramental worship, our theory of the process is not nearly so important as our estimate of the moral implications that arise out of the experience conveyed. We may compare Paul's use



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in argument of the curious expression, "baptised for the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 29). There he is apparently referring to some survival of a pagan idea in the Christian Church. It may have been the custom for the living to be baptised on behalf of those who had died without Christian baptism. The *argumentum ad hominem* is quite valid, even although, as is most likely, Paul did not approve the practice, which was at least a tacit recognition of the belief that the dead live. In any case, as regards "spiritual" meat and drink, we can find no argument on these words for attributing to Paul a mystery view of the sacramental meal.

(2) 1 Cor. x. 14-22.—What does Paul mean by "communion with<sup>1</sup> the body and blood of Christ?" The words must be explained by reference to xi. 26<sup>2</sup>. We hold communion with Christ as crucified. "As often as ye eat, etc., ye do *proclaim* the Lord's death, till He come." In other words we "represent," in a fashion "preach" or "announce," what the Death of Christ stands for. This sacrament is also a gospel. It proclaims that the old relationship to sin is done away. Moreover, here Paul is also combatting antinomianism. It is the antinomianism that ignores the persistent influence of indulgence in old practices that were once charged with the meanings of pagan religion. It is idle to say that "to me personally food offered to an idol is nothing. I simply take part as a Christian in these feasts for social reasons." This is a proud forgetfulness of our own weakness. It is also a loveless forgetfulness of the claims of the weak, who are unable so to detach

<sup>1</sup> "With" and not "of" is undoubtedly the only admissible translation of the genitive in the Greek.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, *op. cit.* p. 270.

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themselves in thought from the "demon." It is the "demon's" table and he is the host. Christ is the host at His own table. The two acts are incompatible; "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons." In other words, Paul claims that the Lord's Supper as a sacramental meal is not to be equated with pagan religious meals. It is of a different character, and stands for a certain unique and absolute relationship of loyalty to Jesus Christ as the crucified Saviour. The religious idea which probably lay behind many forms of sacrificial meal—communion with the god by the absorption of common food—is here present in its Greek form. It is not meant that the flesh of the demon is absorbed, any more than "communion with the altar" can mean absorption of the altar.<sup>1</sup> What Paul means is that the sacrificial idea is present in both cases, and that, do what we will, or think what we will, communion with a demon is incongruous alongside communion with the body and blood of Christ, *i.e.*, with a crucified Christ.

(3) 1 Cor. xi. 17-34.—The words, "This is my body," ought to be sufficient to prove, if proof be necessary, that neither Jesus nor Paul conceived of the bread becoming other than it really is. What then, are we to make of v. 30? We have already seen what "discerning the Lord's body" means. Condemnation is the result for those who come to communion unworthily, which is, of course, not the same as being unworthy to come. The judgment may work itself out in many ways, if it is only a spirit of irreverence, a dulness of conscience, a blindness of spiritual perception. Paul sees in recent sickness and death among the Corinthian Christians examples of God's judgment upon them for their abuses; they have been guilty of sacri-

<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, *op. cit.* 273.

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lege. It is a sombre view, but it is an *obiter dictum*. He does not exalt it into a principle, nor regard it as part of what "he received from the Lord." Least of all can he be said to regard the sickness and death as the direct physical result of unworthy eating and drinking. He simply means that they "have crucified the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame." Hence these marks of God's displeasure.

The majestic words, "Until He come" (v. 26), remind these Corinthians that this new attitude into which they have been brought towards the power and influence of all that is impure and sinful, is no passing phase. At His coming, Jesus will vindicate their loyalty and their faith. No communion season exhausts itself in pious emotions or new professions of loyalty. It brings us into fellowship with Him who is alive for evermore; it is the expression of a continuous act of submission to the Redeemer from sin. "Until He come" means that we believe that redemption has an eternal and cosmic significance; that present cleansing from sin is only an earnest of a future blamelessness; that the love that cleanses is deathless and eternal, and belongs to that order of things that shall never pass away.

## XVI

### THE ORGANISER

PAUL, in one of those moments when he gives us a glimpse into his private circumstances, and talks about himself, at the end of an enumeration of the hardships he endured, breaks off with the words, "Along with all the other things I do not mention, there is that pressing business of each day, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. xi. 28). The apostle's capacity as an organiser is developed in response to the practical problems that emerged in connection with the various communities, which either asked or required advice and guidance, restraint and encouragement. His epistolary style gives us the impression that he is often interrupted; and these interruptions must often have come from this source, especially during his imprisonment. Paul's heart was sensitive and sympathetic. He was sensitive not only to the suffering of his brethren,—"Who is weak and I am not weak?"<sup>1</sup>—but also to their moral weakness and instability, and to all that would mar the ideal beauty of the Church, "the bride of Christ." The "order" of the Church of Christ is a subject dear to his heart. "God is not a God of disorder, but of harmony" (1 Cor. xiv. 33). "Let all things be done decently and in order" (*ib.* v. 40).

The organisation of the Church of Christ was not imposed upon it from without by external authority

<sup>1</sup> *cf.* The revelation of the "pastor's heart" in 2 Cor. vii. 3ff. See Denney, "Expositor's Bible," *in loc.*

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or precept. It is the development of forces at work within it, the power of "the Spirit." Those who desire a vivid picture of the "life" that appeared in these earliest Christian communities may be referred to Dr. Lindsay's description of "a Christian Church in Apostolic times."<sup>1</sup> Even as Paul felt that it was the creative power of God that was at work in his own experience of Christ, so he was confronted with it among his own converts. The Church of Christ is a supernatural foundation. Elemental forces are always at work within it. Just as men have learned to harness the forces of nature, so Paul and everyone who may claim to be in "the apostolic succession" knows that the business of Church organisation is to deal with the manifestations of an energy of no human creation. It is a defective sense of organisation that has been responsible for most of the secessions and disruptions that have rent the body of Christ. Men have sought to quench the Spirit, instead of controlling and making channels for it.

Paul is the wisest of all ecclesiastical organisers. He had a genius for organisation. The fact is too often obscured that the great hymn of love in 1 Cor. xiii. is really a hymn in praise of the elementary principle of all organisation, whether ecclesiastical or social—Christian love. Paul has no place for the mere "hustler" in Church life, however strong his faith. "I may have such absolute faith that I can remove mountains, but if I have not love, I count for nothing." Pushful Christianity, the gospel of outward success, has sometimes set landslides in motion, that have filled up valleys, but have buried the souls of men. 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3 has its primary application to ecclesiastical "push

<sup>1</sup> "The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries," pp. 41-66.

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and go" of whatever kind. Noisy and unrestrained preaching, the trumpeting of large sums of money, the engineering of revivals, without love, are as "sounding brass and a clanging cymbal," the same class of sound with which the Corinthians were familiar in heathen worship. They are spiritual forces gone wrong.

Multifarious were the questions that arose in the churches of Paul's day. Not all of them can be dealt with here. There was, for example, marriage, and the woman's question, where Paul's solutions are usually regarded as the least applicable to modern life. This is no doubt in many respects true. We have, however, to remember that Paul is legislating for questions of his own day. I suppose that if we had in our midst a public opinion that tolerated "free love," we might find even in Paul's words principles implied that will never pass away. We must note that Paul expressly distinguishes between his own words and the precepts of the Lord on the sacredness of Christian marriage, which are eternal principles. Paul realised that two moral conceptions of such questions, opposed to one another as God and Satan are opposed, were fighting their battle within the precincts of single homes. We may have something very nearly akin to it, and as Christians be not nearly so sensitive and alert to the fact as we ought. As regards the woman's question, I imagine that if it ever became the fashion for women to come to church in extreme forms of *toilette décolletée*, puritan legislation would be required, as in the case of the unveiled women at Corinth.<sup>1</sup> If Paul's judgments of the woman's question, in the form in

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the Greeks only the *hetaerae* went about unveiled. They were often highly accomplished women. Slave women were shaven, and this was also the punishment for an adulteress.



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which it presented itself at Corinth, seem hard and arbitrary, as undoubtedly they sometimes are, let us realise that for him the "time was short," and he did not see the twentieth century at the end of his vista. Paul certainly appeals in support of his views to nature and to established custom (1 Cor. xi. 14-16), which often represent the last stronghold of blind prejudice and conservatism. Paul, however, is legislating for a very acute moral question, and this fact must temper our judgment of his words in this connection. The living Christ will decide the woman's question in His own Church and in His own world, in His own way and in His own time. The time is now. We are required to consult Paul, as he himself would have us do, only where he has "a commandment from the Lord." The Spirit, taking of the teaching and the attitude of Jesus and "showing them unto us," is our ultimate guide. I am aware that these are inadequate words on a very pressing religious and social question; but they may be sufficient to indicate that the new "spirit" in the Church and in society dare not be "quenched." Rather must it be employed and guided on Christian lines.

We may take, as supreme examples of Paul's organising genius, his utterances on two matters, both entering deeply into Church life and management. The one is *spiritual ministry* and the other *finance*. His views on the one are found in 1 Cor. xii.-xiv.; on the other in 2 Cor. viii., ix.

1. *Spiritual Ministry*, including the conduct of worship.

In the earliest gatherings for worship, no one seems to have been appointed to preside. The feature that characterised these meetings for worship and other spiritual ministrations, seems

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to have been a high state of spiritual ferment, such as is present in a religious revival in our own day. "The spiritual gifts" are enumerated in 1 Cor. xii. 8-11. They were of a very varied kind. The gift of "wisdom" is no doubt the power to interpret Scripture; the gifts of "knowledge" a certain intuitive power of discerning spiritual truth, in its application and meaning. There is a gift of "faith," a wider term than its usual religious content implies. It includes an energy which is put into all service, and springs from inward conviction. Faith "energises" by love (Gal. v. 6). The gift of "healing," means, doubtless, some power of exorcising spirits, or of curing cases of nervous disorder. Another gift is that of "tongues" which are said to be "various." Generally speaking it may be defined as "rapt ejaculatory prayer uttered during unrestrained emotion, where words often took the place of sentences."<sup>1</sup> The gift of "interpreting tongues" may probably be a power of constructing intelligible sentences out of these single ejaculations. Another gift is also mentioned, "prophecy." This is evidently impassioned or ecstatic utterance, the outcome of a sense that some special message has been given the bearer of the gift for communication to others on the spot. It was a kind of *extempore* preaching, sometimes most effective if really spontaneous and spoken to the moment, always deleterious both to speaker and hearer if allowed to become a settled habit. Paul reminds the Corinthians that prophets have certain mental powers. These have to be exercised, and the prophecy itself must be submitted to the same test (1 Cor. xiv. 29). Paul devotes more attention to the prophetic gift than to any other. Other gifts are mentioned in 1 Cor. xii. 28: "teaching,"

<sup>1</sup> T. M. Lindsay, *op. cit.*, 47 n.

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probably the same as "wisdom;" "helps" or "helpers," indicating powers of practical counsel; "governments," which might be translated powers of administration and management. It is noticeable that prophecy comes next to apostleship; and that the gift of tongues comes last in the list.

All of these gifts may be regarded as men's natural capacities or talents, reinforced, intensified, and invigorated by the action of religious enthusiasm. Paul is conscious that he is dealing with volcanic material. Each one is inclined to put his own particular gift first. Under the influence of profound emotion, the meeting for worship must have tended to degenerate into utter confusion. Paul knows quite well that religious emotion is not an end in itself. The understanding must both be present in it, and be employed to restrain it. He passes a swift judgment on such an utterance as "cursed be Jesus" (1 Cor. xii. 3). It is difficult to find a place for an utterance like this in a Christian service. We forget that this community at Corinth was but a "tiny island in a sea of paganism." Men of all classes, and all stages of education were included.<sup>1</sup> Here and there would undoubtedly be signs of mental instability. There was presented an extraordinary variety of phenomena. His is an extraordinary insight and sympathy that can detect the same Spirit, the same Christ, the same God behind it all.

What requires to be created is a sense of corporate responsibility; what requires to be conserved is independence of action. It is very striking to note how, even in matters of worship, Paul is concerned to encourage and not to repress spon-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 26; Rom. xvi. 23 (the city treasurer); 1 Cor. i. 14 (Crispus, an elder of the synagogue; Gaius, a rich merchant); 1 Cor. i. 11 (Chloe, a lady of position).

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taneity and independence. Those who are to guide and lead must owe their pre-eminence to the recognition of their gifts by the community itself, and in special cases to its deliberate choice. The principle that Paul applies to the case of litigation would no doubt apply to worship as well (1 Cor. vi. 5). Even Paul himself has no desire to impose an external authority on matters of faith. "Not that we lord it over your faith—no, we co-operate for your joy—you have a standing of your own in the faith" (2 Cor. i. 24, Moffatt). His insistence on corporate responsibility is equally strong. He develops this idea, which is applicable to all phases of Church life, especially in connection with worship. Each gift of the Spirit is not for personal edification, but for the common good (1 Cor. xii. 7)—an expansion of the idea that the Church is the "body" of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12ff.).

It is also a development of Jesus' teaching. "He that is greatest among you let him be your servant." "Service" is the origin of leadership. The true way to pre-eminence is love (1 Cor. xii. 31). "The Church comes before the ministry, and it creates for itself and its own needs its ministering service."<sup>1</sup> First the doing of whatever service is for the highest good of the community; thereby alone can permanent offices be created and kept.

Besides the meeting for worship there seems to have been a meeting which took the form of a common meal, followed by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; also a gathering of church members for the purpose of transacting business. The former is referred to in connection with the abuses that are rebuked in 1 Cor. xi.; the latter evidently had the control of finance, and also dealt with the excommunication of offending members and with

<sup>1</sup> T. M. Lindsay, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

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matters of discipline generally. Paul's general principles of edification, mutual responsibility and independence of action for single communities apply to all three. Corinth, of which we have the fullest information, may be regarded as typical of the Pauline churches. To see in such a community the "body of Christ," meant not only the application of the great principle of love in the conduct of its members to one another, but it meant also that he who so designated it was himself possessed by the same spirit. It is not only for the guidance of individual members but of Paul himself as an organiser that the words might be spoken:—

"Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade; gives itself no airs; is never rude; never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong; love is gladdened by goodness; always slow to expose; always eager to believe the best; always hopeful; always patient." (Moffatt.)

2. We may take as an example of Paul's organising power his attitude towards the very mundane question of finance. In 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4, he tells the Corinthians of the arrangements he wishes them to make for the purpose of raising a sum of money for the poor of Jerusalem. Paul attached some importance to this collection. It was a means of keeping the Gentile world in touch with Judæa; and of proving to the Jerusalem Church that Gentile Christians were genuine. He now follows up his suggestions by an appeal in 2 Cor. viii., ix. The marvellous thing about this appeal is the way in which such an ungrateful subject as money is left at the end of it, on a level of thought only lower than that exacted by the thought of the mercy and love of God in the gift of His Son. It

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ends with a sudden and startling ascription of praise: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift."

See how Paul approaches the difficult subject. He makes no mere frontal attack. He begins by telling them of what Macedonia has done (2 Cor. viii. 1-5). The Church in Macedonia was not rich, but it had given up to its means and beyond it. It has done more than Paul expected. Moreover they have passed through a severe time of trial, and this extraordinary generosity is the fruit of it. It is a delicate way of saying that those who live in peace and comfort are often the least inclined to be generous. He then passes on to say that he has commissioned Titus to visit them, and that he expects no less from them than from Macedonia. He makes use of the spirit of wholesome rivalry. He also takes opportunity to point out with infinite tact that generosity is a means of Christian utterance, which must not confine itself to the use of spiritual gifts, or lose itself in emotion and talk. "The kingdom of God does not consist in talk" he says elsewhere, "but in practical efficiency" (1 Cor. iv. 20). The reminder is not out of place in such a centre of spiritual ferment as Corinth. And then, either to remove any notion that he is disparaging the more distinctively religious side, or, perhaps, after his fashion, merely uttering, in a context that does not suggest it, a great thought of which his heart was always full, he reminds them of the grace of Christ, the sacrifice of the Incarnation, the glory He left for our sakes. In any case the manner of Christ's entry into our life ever combines in itself two results, a very moving thought of the love of God, and a hallowing of the more ordinary and mundane activities of life. It requires a motive no less than this to do well the most ordinary things, not to speak of the giving



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of money. Yet Paul's reservoir is not yet exhausted. "It will not be good for you, or for anyone to begin an enterprise like this, and then to flag. It is to your interest to go on" (vv. 10, 11). Flagging results in a harvest of moral incapacity. It means a habit of irresolution, and an enfeebled conscience. This warning is followed by some words that are both comforting and wise (vv. 11-15). The main thing is, he says, to preserve your "readiness." "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver" (ix. 7). Keep your motives bright. This is more than the actual amount given, which need be only according to your means. And then follows perhaps the shrewdest principle of all. "Selfishness," he says, virtually, "is not the surest road to success. The benefit is not all on the recipients' side. Their abundance also will one day supply your want, under other circumstances, and it may be in another fashion; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

This amazing wealth of ideas on the subject of giving makes a powerful appeal. Further, Paul does not hesitate to deal with the unworthy suspicions already aroused in the hearts of his enemies by his eagerness for this collection. "Be assured," they said, "he will make something out of it" (2 Cor. viii. 20f). He suggests the only way to meet such cruel insinuation. He tells them that he has co-opted Titus as a trustee in the matter, and has availed himself of the services of another who is nameless, appointed by the churches themselves (v. 19). Timothy is also associated (v. 22). These three are sent to Corinth as a guarantee for Paul's common honesty. It is a revelation of the man's humility. He is not content, in any mood of haughty self-righteousness, to be "above suspicion." He takes ordinary human precautions to avoid it.

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2 Cor. ix. contains more exhortation on the subject of a varied kind. Even a touch of kindly and ironical humour lights it up. "I am sending these three brethren that you may be quite ready. I have been telling them that you would be. This in case any 'Macedonians' accompany me when I come, and find you are not ready. Thus I (not to speak of you) would be made to look foolish who was so confident of you" (vv. 3, 4). "Above all," says Paul in conclusion, "let it be a willing gift. Don't have the money wrung out of you" (v. 5). Surely he has already done much by the alternating power and charm of his appeal to render a willing mood natural. Gradually, in these closing verses he leads up to the highest level of all, the level on which his own real thought has been moving all the time. He revealed the fact in viii. 9. Now he makes it doubly plain. "This is God's work, and the harvest for which you are sowing is His. What is to be your share in it? There ought to be no sense of compulsion or of grudging in the service of the Lord of such a harvest. He Himself will see to it that you are never without, either for yourselves, or to give away. It is His habit in nature; it will be in grace also (vv. 8-10). You will find men giving thanks to God for your generosity. They are not mere bodily needs of poorer church-members that you are supplying. Yours will be a gift that will show in Jerusalem what God can do for Gentiles. You will be drawn into the circle of their prayers" (vv. 11-14). Finally, as though he would have them gaze for a moment into the unutterable mystery of love that was the source of the words he had spoken, a source not to be described but to be used, the key to the secret of all generosity and to his own life, he says, "thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

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The secret of Paul's success as an organiser may be summed up under two points.

(1) His *Idealism*. He idealises the Church at Corinth. With all its disorders and abuses, he sees in it the body of the Lord. He idealises his colleagues, the unnamed brother, "whose praise is in all the churches" (viii. 18); Titus (v. 16), "with an interest in you equal to my own;" Timothy (v. 22), "who has many times given ample proof of earnestness." "These brothers of mine are apostles of the Church, and a glory to Christ" (v. 23). As an organiser he never forgets that the material he seeks to build up is human, men and women with hearts responsive to generous treatment, all the more open to profit by rebuke that they have been praised, all the more ready to energise in service that such an ample trust and responsibility is laid on them. After all, it was only the way in which the Saviour had treated Paul. "According as I myself have received mercy in holding as I do this ministry, I never lose heart" (2 Cor. iv. 1).

(2) His *conception of the Apostleship*.—Paul clings to the title of "Apostle to the Gentiles" with a burning sense of its dignity and importance. Most of his letters are prefaced by the claim and all are pervaded by it. Too much has undoubtedly been made by Deissmann and others of the discovery that Paul uses non-literary Greek as the medium of his writing. This is an invaluable discovery, but does not by any means reduce his letters to the level of documents, called forth by a passing need, and occasional in their character. If Paul undoubtedly, as a rule, takes little care regarding the literary form of his language, and would have disclaimed any pretensions to "excellency of speech," the great prose poems of 1 Cor.

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xiii., Romans viii. 31f., and the prose of Colossians are exceptions. It is not the form of his utterance, but its subject matter that he regards as permanent and eternal. He is conscious, among other things, that his subject is one that involves the destiny of the great world-empire of Rome. He does not speak of the Empire as Revelation does (xvii. 5), as "loathsome, and dangerous, and doomed." Its protection served his purpose often against the antagonism of Judaism. It was a temporary restraining influence, in the providence of God; but King Jesus was a greater potentate than Cæsar (2 Thess. ii. 6-8). The Roman Empire will one day be "taken out of the way," its function fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> He has one topic, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2), to whom is given now the "name that is above every name" (Phil. ii. 9f.). This is the gospel, the message of which he is the messenger, an "envoy" from Christ Himself. It is almost disconcerting to find with what a militant sense of personal dignity Paul claims to be an apostle, and how he communicates to his utterances about Jesus Christ a note of authority, which he intends to be heard throughout. There are even indications that he intended his letters to have a certain permanent validity, and to be regulative beyond their immediate destination (Col. iv. 16).<sup>2</sup> Any conception of the individuality of Paul must give a chief place to his apostolic consciousness. The authority he claims for his words is based on intuition and not on argument. He appeals to facts and not to inferences. "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen the Lord?"

<sup>1</sup> cf. J. Moffatt, "Expositor's Greek Testament," IV., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See an article by H. A. A. Kennedy, *Expository Times*, October, 1915.

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When what he says is based on inference alone, he tells us so (*cf.* 1 Cor. vii. 6, 10, 12).

The word "apostle" was applied in the New Testament to many outside the circle of the "twelve." It is a title given to Barnabas (Acts xiii. 2, 3). Andronicus and Junias, by the obvious interpretation of Romans xvi. 7, are also included.<sup>1</sup> Paul ranks Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25), Titus, Timothy and another unnamed (2 Cor. viii. 23), as "apostles of the church." He speaks of the Judaisers ironically as "pre-eminent apostles," "false apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 5, 13).

The application of the word to Timothy, and to the Judaisers is the real key to its meaning. An "apostle" is essentially a missionary, one who has given his life as a missionary preacher of the Gospel of Christ. At the same time, those among them are distinguished who had been among the immediate friends of Jesus on earth, and the significant thing is that Paul claims to be of their number, solely on the ground that he had "seen" Jesus on the Damascus road (1 Cor. ix. 1). Apparently he attaches much more importance to the Resurrection appearances in this connection, than to personal intimacy with Jesus of Nazareth (*cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 7). He can boldly reckon the pre-Christian days as an experience that is equivalent in his case to intimacy with Jesus, of Nazareth. God separated "him from the womb," to be an apostle to the Gentiles; the Law "kept him under tutelage," until Christ was revealed to him.

It is important to note the use that Paul makes of this authoritative position. He fully recognises that a "missionary"—just as to-day—has much to

<sup>1</sup> See J. Denney, "Expositor's Greek Testament," I., *in loc.*; J. B. Lightfoot, "Galatians," pp. 92ff.; T. M. Lindsay, *op. cit.* p. 79. n. 3.

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do in the way of organisation, as well as of preaching. He had to see to it that proper arrangements were made for worship and internal management, and that proper care was expended on the sick, the poor, and the young.<sup>1</sup> Paul "knew better than to leave his young societies with nothing more than the vague memory of pious preaching."<sup>2</sup> We have already seen that Paul is deeply concerned to leave his churches complete freedom of action in the matter of internal arrangements. Once he tells the Corinthians that he "refrained" from visiting them (2 Cor. i. 23), in order that they might first settle the question of the immoral person by their own exercise of discipline, on the lines he himself very forcibly suggests (1 Cor. v. 1-13). He relies ultimately not on his authority, but on their affection and reverence for him (2 Cor. vii. 12). His own sentence of excommunication is uttered as he meets with them, "in spirit," in their own assembly convened for the purpose (1 Cor. v. 4 *f.*). How very far Paul is from giving a merely authoritative pronouncement is shown in the way in which he has afterwards characteristically to tone down his language (1 Cor. v. 9*ff.*; 2 Cor. ii. 1-11). He has no wish that "Satan," to whom he had consigned the offending person, "should take advantage of our position. I am not ignorant of his devices" (v. 11). Paul's is by nature a forcible character that might easily impose its will upon others. The work that Jesus had wrought upon him is never more clearly shown than in the cases where he restrains himself from personal interference in matters affecting the internal organisation of his churches, and will rather suffer the deepest

<sup>1</sup> *cf.* J. Moffatt, "Expositor's Greek Testament," IV., p. 9., with his very apt quotation from "Wesley's Journal."

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 10.



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anxiety until he knows that matters have been properly settled (2 Cor. ii. 4). He cancelled a promised visit to Corinth for no other reason, which gave to his enemies one of many opportunities for depreciation. They accused him of "fickleness," having the capacity to understand only one kind of organising—that which is done from without by the application of superior force or authority (2 Cor. i. 15ff.).

## XVII

### THE MAN—AN ESTIMATE

"His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible" (2 Cor. x. 10). This estimate of the apostle, even although it comes from the lips of an enemy, is not lightly to be set aside. First, however, it requires to be understood. "Bodily presence" does not refer only to Paul's physique, but to his whole personality as conditioned by it. There is a tradition, preserved in the Acts of Paul and Thekla,<sup>1</sup> of a glimpse a friend had of him as he stood at some spot on the road from Antioch to Lystra. He is represented as, "small in size, with meeting eye-brows, with a rather large nose, bald-headed, bow-legged, strongly built, full of grace; for at times he looked like a man, and at times he had the face of an angel." This may embody an early tradition, but must be considered in connection with the fact that at Lystra the excited populace identified him with Hermes, the messenger of Zeus, who is always represented as a graceful, well-formed, figure. Probably however, the populace would be impressed on this occasion more by deeds than by appearance. The gods could take any shape they cared; and Paul's face lit up as he spoke, like the face of an angel. At the same time "bodily appearance" in the Corinthian passage means more than physique. It includes "personality." His enemies alleged that the general impression he made was "ineffective" or "weak;"

<sup>1</sup> See W. M. Ramsay, "The Church in the Roman Empire," pp. 31ff.

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and that his delivery was "beneath contempt." The latter statement is equivalent to saying that he had none of the Greek rhetorical arts when he addressed a public gathering. As he tells us himself, he determined when he came among them to be a "know-nothing;" his message dealt with "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2). The former statement refers mostly to the effect of his message, which would not naturally commend itself to the Greek mind. One who died in such weakness and shame did not correspond to the Greek idea either of a saviour or of a god.<sup>1</sup> The criticism is really a valuable indication of the fervour and passion with which Paul spoke of the Cross of Christ. The Greeks of Corinth would resent such an emotional appeal, especially if unaccompanied by any of the tricks of the rhetorician's art. They meant that, from the purely intellectual point of view, Paul was unconvincing when he spoke. "I may not be much of a speaker, but I do *know*. I never failed to make my meaning plain to any of you" (2 Cor. xi. 6). He probably did not use such strong language about his opponents in actual speech as in writing. Strength of language would appeal to the Greek, where the conciliation of love would fail. "I am prepared," he says, "to court-martial anyone who remains insubordinate, once your submission is complete" (2 Cor. x. 6, Moffatt). More than once in his letters, as, for example, in the case of the immoral person at Corinth itself, Paul finds it necessary to tone down his utterances from a distance on any urgent question that arose.

The probability is that Paul himself regarded the depreciatory statement of his enemies as a pure slander, and was quite unconscious that

<sup>1</sup> P. 135.

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when he talked with men face to face, all the native courtesy and winningness of his personality were uppermost. The most remarkable feature about the personality of Paul must have been the way in which, in ordinary intercourse, and in a lesser degree in his writing, he habitually restrained his natural forcefulness and impulsiveness, and his consciousness of authority that sprang from the conviction that he was in the right. He does so in the spirit of love manifesting itself in an attitude of reasonableness and kindness. His aim always is not to demolish but to edify, to build up. He will not overawe them by his letters (2 Cor. x. 8, 9). Not infrequently the impression of his personality given by a man's public utterances when read, is quite contradicted by a personal interview, or by hearing him speak. It is always open to malignancy and prejudice to say that this is due to deception on his part. There *was* an inconsistency sometimes between the tone of his letters, and his attitude face to face (Gal. iv. 20), which was interpreted as pliancy, weakness, double-dealing, and cowardice. The real explanation was that Paul was a "gentleman." The words in 2 Cor. x. 1, should be read in inverted commas, "I who am humble enough to your face, but courageous enough when I am away from you." His enemies had not the moral qualities fitted to understand the reason of the outward discrepancy. Its secret source is the "gentleness and consideration of Christ." That which Paul held in check, is the most significant side of his Christian character. His outbursts of righteous anger, occasionally degenerating into fierceness (1 Cor. v. 5; Phil. iii. 2), and coarseness (Gal. v. 12, Moffatt), are an indication of the torrent of passionate conviction within. The fierceness of the Jewish persecutor is harnessed in the

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service of Jesus. His hot and provocative nature only emphasises his wonderful patience and sympathy. His writings never conceal the man for those who have eyes to see. "Some men's books are outworks, behind which they stubbornly withdraw themselves, but this man is vehemently present in all his writings, his individuality never deserts his words."<sup>1</sup>

Just as he is naturally impatient of contradiction (*e.g.*, 1 Cor. xi. 16), especially when he feels that the Christ who "lives" in him is contradicted and spurned, so is he full of a deep longing for human sympathy. He has no desire to be regarded as a mere counsellor and preacher from a distance. Sometimes he writes a sentence at the end of his letters with his own hand, and once pathetically adds, "remember, I am a prisoner; grace be with you" (Col. iv. 18). We may suspect also that all was not always in the handwriting of his amanuensis (Gal. vi. 11). He is filled with affectionate love, and had a genius for private friendships, both among men and women. The variety of personal names—often otherwise obscure—scattered throughout his letters, is proof of this. How generously he speaks of them all as "fellow-workers" and "fellow-soldiers!" With what pain does he view their defection! (2 Tim. vi. 10). "I desire," he says, "not yours but you" (2 Cor. xii. 14). As a pastor, he does not deal with men in the lump, but individualises them. Even the most timorous, scrupulous, unintelligent, erring soul in his congregations was sure of his compassionate sympathy. "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" (2 Cor. xi. 29).<sup>2</sup> And along with this human

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Macgregor, "Christian Freedom," p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> See a fine passage by Dr. Denney, 2 Cor. "Expositor's Bible," pp. 340-1.

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affection there goes an extraordinary avoidance of inflicting any unnecessary or discouraging pain by his rebukes. The "courteous diplomacy," for example, of the thanksgiving in 2 Cor. i. 3ff., is very striking. Paul cannot give thanks for moral and spiritual progress in Corinth, as he can in Thessalonica. Instead, he gives thanks for his own suffering, and the comfort that came with it, so that he is able "to comfort those who are in distress" (2 Cor. i. 3-7). Corinth is suffering from a different malady, and Paul's subsequent words are destined to make the pain more acute, ere the cancer is removed. At the very outset he makes them feel that he knows much of "the pain that God is allowed to guide" (2 Cor. vii. 10, Moffatt). His experience will "make them strong to endure the same sufferings as I have myself" (i.6).

Paul lived his whole life in an atmosphere of mingled controversy and affection. Men were either violently opposed to him or deeply attached. He was a man either to be hated or loved. He did not altogether escape the temptations attaching to such an environment, but it may truthfully be said that the controversies in which he is involved are not, on his side at least, personal. "In all his letters that have been preserved to us, Paul is absorbed in the needs of the moment, eager to save his readers from some mistake into which they are liable to fall or have actually fallen—anxious to strengthen them and to move their minds—compelled to answer accusations against himself and misrepresentations of his actions which had endangered his hold on the hearts of his correspondents. He is always, as it were, with his back against a wall, fighting for life against principalities and powers, men and sin."<sup>1</sup> And the weapons

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Ramsay, "Pauline Studies," p. 82.



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of this warfare are not carnal. He has no selfish end in view.<sup>1</sup> The much discussed episode, in which he divides the Sanhedrin, with the words, "I am a Pharisee," is but a rally of the really religious element in the assembly, against the worldly and unspiritual Sadducees. "I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees. For the hope of the resurrection of the dead, I am on trial." It is the cause, and not himself, Paul seeks to save. It is legitimate spiritual diplomacy. The question of the resurrection involved for Paul the whole matter of the spiritual and moral value of life (I Cor. xv. 12-19). Even as, with a Homeric directness, the Cross of Christ presented itself to him as a dramatic contest of the spiritual powers of good and evil, so his own life with its "word of the Cross" has its centre and significance not on earth, but in heaven. This intuition of the spiritual world, of a great new moral order, centring in the Christ who died and rose again, is the endowment of the prophet. In the New Testament, Paul represents a return to the manner of the prophetic utterance, "Thus saith the Lord," where the "Lord" is Jesus. "I have the mind of Christ." "This is the will of Christ, and what He means." Men receive the Christian teaching of Paul, as he himself received it, not because they are convinced of it in a cold intellectual way, but because they see as he sees. Some instinct deep in our hearts must rise up to bear witness to the things he affirms. Jesus Christ "is not 'yea' and 'nay,' but in Him is 'yea.' " It is the way of faith.

The remarkable thing to note is that in this stormy atmosphere of religious controversy, Paul allows free play, in all their untarnished spontaneity, to his own natural endowments, and feelings. Patriotic

<sup>1</sup> cf. Phil. i. 19.

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fervour, exuberant and abounding joy and thankfulness, fragments of prayer, generous and discerning praise, unqualified assertion that puts all logic to shame, outbursts of sheer poetry like 1 Cor. xiii, irony, sarcasm, a depth of tenderness, sympathy, and human affection—all these combine to render his thought difficult and discontinuous, but the man himself is plain. We are never in doubt as to the real drift of his meaning. When he is driven to self-defence, to what he describes as "glorying," he calls it "folly." It is a pain to him to lay bare his innermost soul, and to assert, as sometimes he has to do, his own sincerity (2 Cor. xii. 12ff.). Yet his own judgment of his writing stands. "When I write you, I mean nothing else but what you read and understand. I hope that you will understand it to the full, even as you have already understood in part the meaning of my life" (1 Cor. i. 13). The man is indeed "vehemently present in all his writings."

One or two only of these human characteristics can be mentioned here. It is superfluous to speak of Paul's use of irony and sarcasm (*e.g.* 1 Cor. iv. 8, vi. 4; 2 Cor. xi. 4 ff.). Once or twice he relieves the tension of some of his utterances by flashes of humour and playfulness. He suggests that there may be occasions when speakers "in tongues" should "address themselves and God" (1 Cor. xiv. 28). Once, in uttering a fear lest some of his hearers become discouraged and apostatise, and in giving an account of the sufferings and calamities he himself had to endure in token of his sincerity, he instinctively feels that he has been unrestrained (2 Cor. vi. 11). "Restraint?" he says, "that is in place only with strangers, and you are friends. What is needed is that you should remove the barriers of your heart before me. Come now. A fair exchange, as I might say to children: Open

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up your hearts to me : ”<sup>1</sup> The close of the letter to the Philippians is a most delicate and playful way of acknowledging a very generous gift of money, and of relieving what to him was an embarrassing situation. There is an almost Stoic pride in the words : “Not that I complain of want. I have learnt in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content” (Phil. iv. 11ff). His, however, is an independence that expresses itself in giving a most charming “receipt” for the money. “It is not the money I am anxious for ; what I am anxious for is the interest that accumulates in this way to your divine credit ! . . . I am amply supplied with what you have sent by Epaphroditus, a fragrant perfume, the sort of sacrifice that God approves and welcomes” (iv. 17ff, Moffatt). Or again, take the playfulness in the letter to Philemon, which as a whole is one of the most gracious examples of Paul’s courteous and persuasive power of appeal. He makes a pleasing use of commercial jargon. “You count me a partner ? Then receive him as you would receive me, and if he has cheated you of any money or owes you any sum, put that down to my account. This is in my own hand-writing ; ‘I, Paul, promise to refund it’—not to mention that you owe me, over and above, your very soul. Come, brother, let me have some return from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ” (vv. 17-20, Moffatt).

Occasionally, in Paul, we hear the Jewish aristocrat speak. Not only is this the case when he gives details of his parentage and training—“a Hebrew of the Hebrews,” but it emerges in what has been well called “a militant sense of personal dignity.”<sup>2</sup> It mingles with, and is most often absorbed by

<sup>1</sup> cf. J. Moffat’s translation, *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> W. M. Macgregor, *op. cit.* p. 58.

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the sense that just as he formerly represented the finest traditions of the Jewish race, so now he is filled with a wonderful self-consciousness that he is the "ambassador" and apostle of Christ to the world. Paul must have repressed much when he heard the Judaisers speak of Peter, and James, and John as "authorities" and "pillars" to whom he owed deference. Socially, he was of another rank than they; he now claims his spiritual rank alongside of them, in Christ. "Paul—an apostle, who holds neither his appointment nor commission at men's hands, but at the hands of Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead."

The lyric strain of praise and joy that now is heard as an undertone in his writing, and now bursts forth into utterance, is very marked. Here is a man whose every longing and need Jesus has satisfied, and whose cup runs over. His is the joy of victory. Paul is one who, next to Jesus, has taught us to say, "All things work together for good to them that love God," and by "all things" he means the Universe. Nature has a sad and not a joyous place in his thoughts, but ever she strains in earnest expectation towards her redemption that draws nigh (Romans ii. 1ff). In his travels he passed, we are told, through some of the most glorious scenery in the world. Yet in his writing there is not so much as a blade of green grass. His world is a world of men.

" Oft when the Word is on me to deliver  
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare ;  
Desert or throng, the city or the river,  
Meets in a lucid Paradise of air,—

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,  
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,—  
Bearing their one hope with an empty wonder,  
Sadly contented in a show of things ;—

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Then with a rush the intolerable craving  
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call—  
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,  
Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

He even seems to resent the plain meaning of the words, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," and to say that God really cares only for men (1 Cor. ix. 9). He revels in the life of cities, and with no ordinary zest he employs metaphors taken from the games. In one of his bitterest moods of self-revelation, he likens the sufferings of his apostleship to the final gladiatorial spectacle in the Roman arena (1 Cor. iv. 9). In another mood altogether, he likens the success of his apostolic preaching to a Roman triumph; with an exquisite sense of joy he speaks of himself as "the fragrance of Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 14-15). "Abound" is a favourite word of his. He does not hesitate to coin a word to express his sense of the triumph and victory of his faith. "We are *super-conquerors* through Him that loved us." He is ever giving thanks to God. To use Montaigne's words in a somewhat alien sense, Paul might have said, "I rather looke on heaven with a cheerfull eye, to thank it, than to begge anything of it."

Wrede says truly that the fact that Christianity has ennobled suffering is largely due to Paul. It would be even truer to say that Paul has been the first to interpret to the hearts of men the meaning of the suffering of Christ, in its significance for our own. By his own experience of suffering he has led suffering and dying men, as no one else has done, to Jesus Christ as the Captain of their salvation. Paul's suffering was not only physical. He knew what it was to be despised and misunderstood, to lose caste, to live in an atmosphere of suspicion and malignity. The pagan attitude

<sup>1</sup> F. H. W. Myers, "St. Paul," p. 34.

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towards pain was one of dislike and resentment; it had no place for pain. Even the Stoic only conquered by ignoring it. Whatever Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was, it was some constantly recurring physical malady, which might be expected to induce repulsion in others, and to suggest that the sufferer lay under God's chastisement. There was some secret power in Paul that enabled even pagan hearts to overcome their instinctive repugnance at the sight he presented when the illness was upon him, and to behold the "angel" in his face (Gal. iv. 14). The mystery is revealed in 2 Cor. xii. 7ff, a passage already referred to.<sup>1</sup> Paul knows well the humiliation of suffering. "It is a messenger of Satan." He also knows the answer to unanswered prayer. "My grace is sufficient for you, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." The answer is for all time. The tense<sup>2</sup> tells us that, "He hath said." Paul has also learned that grace is power, the "dynamic of Christ." James Hinton says, in "The Mystery of Pain"—"There are the materials then, evidently within us, for an entire inversion of our attitude towards pain. The world in this respect, we might almost feel, seems to tremble on the balance. A touch might transform it wholly. One flash of light from the Unseen, one word spoken by God, might suffice to make the dark places bright, and wrap the sorrow-stricken heart of man in the wonder of an unutterable glory."

The light has come, and the word been spoken. Jesus spoke of the "Father" in such a way that He evidently meant men to see the truth of the providence and love of God in all that happens, as He saw them, not by reasoning, but by intuition. God means what He says in the flowers of the field.

<sup>1</sup> pp. 228ff.

<sup>2</sup> cf. J. Denney, 2 Cor., "Expositor's Bible," p. 355.



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It is also His meaning from first to last; and so "on the night in which He was betrayed, He gave thanks." God did not so speak to Paul in the beauty of nature; nature is still unredeemed, "groaning and travailing in pain." Rather would Paul have said with the prophet, "The grass withereth; the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever." The pain and desolation of life have their place in Paul's message, a very prominent place, but they have a halter on their necks. "In all these things we are more than conquerors." We are not like earthly conquerors, compelled to hold our conquests for ourselves; Christ does that for us. Paul's own sufferings are often referred to as "signs" of his apostleship and choice. Paul would say, "By my human testing, I make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ." Paul's experience is an embodiment and realisation of the continuous and contemporaneous answer to all human pain—"My strength is made perfect in weakness."

I need say little of Paul's mental abilities. These have been dealt with and appreciated in many a work and ought to be self-evident. His is no academic type of mind. As regards "culture," probably it is true that he was a *spermologos*, as the academic Athenians said. Sir William Ramsay has well translated the term by a phrase of Browning's, "a picker-up of learning's crumbs." None of his few quotations from Greek writers indicate that he had an extensive library, or read many books outside Jewish literature. His style is, as a rule, the vernacular. His mind moves so quickly, and his thoughts come in such a flood, that the channels of language are often burst. With the heathen he never argued but once—at Athens. Perhaps he regretted the departure from his usual

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custom, and determined when he left Athens for Corinth "to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified."<sup>1</sup> In the Corinthian letters he says many hard things about philosophers and dialecticians. Yet Paul could be a superb dialectician when he argued with Jews. Frequently he turns their own Haggadistic weapons against them, as in the letter to the Galatians (iii. 15ff, iv. 22). Such arguments have little force to-day, and we must not presume that Paul laid too much stress upon them. We have already seen more than once that Paul's intuitions often devour his logic. Luther has said of him in his commentary on Galatians i. 8. "His words are pure flame, and so vehemently does he burn that he begins, if we may so say, to curse the angels." We must also be struck with the way in which, in spite of this rush of thought, he returns again and again, as for example in Romans, to the main idea, and the dominant thought.<sup>2</sup> The centrifugal force in his thinking is balanced by a centripetal.

In conclusion, what is it that constitutes Paul's eternal message to every age? There have been moments in the history of the Christian Church when the Christian gospel would seem to be inadequate to the growing intricacy and complexity of human life and thought, and to be in danger of losing its power of universal appeal, through the widening of the bounds of the world. Paul lived at the first of these moments. He had lived as a Jew of Tarsus in the midst of the great welter of Gentile thought, and, no doubt in obedience to early conservative training, had shut his mind against it. Yet all the time he sought for a message that would meet its need. He could not find it in

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller," p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> cf. F. W. Farrar, "Life of St. Paul," I., pp. 619ff.

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Judaism, even as interpreted by Gamaliel; for it did not nearly satisfy himself. He found what he sought where he least of all expected to find it, in a happening in which there seemed to be concentrated all that was most repulsive and most inimical to his type of thought—the Cross of Christ. It was no lack of the sense of sin, but a type of thought, a mental atmosphere, that prevented Paul from seeing Jesus Christ sooner than he did. It was an atmosphere of high moral earnestness, but painful, poisonous, and frankly discouraging to the weak and the erring, “the things that are not.” It is an atmosphere of legalism where even God can only work under hard and fast conditions, and the moral burden is laid on men. Probably, in his recoil from the dead religion of his day, Paul seems to overstate the true conditions of the vital; but wherever, in any age, religion is dead or dying, Paul’s central message will appeal with ever growing power. The message is that men cannot save themselves. “Salvation,” for Paul, is a term extraordinarily comprehensive. Subjectively, it means deliverance from all fear, whether of the effects of past weakness, or of external hostile forces, or of coming doom. Sin and death, and all forms of evil were for Paul external forces that had gained a firm footing in human nature, and exercised therein authority and rule. They enslave both mind and will. Their power is shattered by the intervention of God. That God is first in the matter, not man, is the distinctive note of Paul’s gospel. The remarkable thing is that God is first in such a variety of ways. He gave the Law to Israel, but in no nation has He “left Himself without witness;” there is a law written even on the heart of the Gentiles. God is “the living God, who made heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is;

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who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 15-18). It is this same doctrine of the prevenient grace of God that breathes all through the speech at Athens, the God who "needs" nothing but "gives to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts xvii. 22-31). All these gifts were in vain, according to the Pauline view, for the purpose of giving the true knowledge of God; "that they should seek God, if haply they might, in their groping, find Him" (v. 27). Paul's conception of God as given in these passages in Acts is necessary in order to supplement, and at the same time to increase the wonder of the conception of God revealed in the Cross of Christ. Paul sees clearly that until Christ came, the Giver was forgotten in the gift. Israel came to worship the Law instead of the Law-giver; the Greek worshipped the forces of nature instead of Him whose beneficent power they represented.

Paul's doctrine is capable of very modern application. Many modern scientific and religious systems result in giving God as little to do as possible. We, too, are in bondage to the "weak and beggarly elements" of the Universe. God is entangled in the meshes of His own laws, or baffled by the vagaries of His own creatures. Our question to-day is not so much, "Who created and sustains that system of things we call the Universe?" but "Who evolves it?" Paul's universe, like ours, presented certain obvious evils inherent in it, sin, pain, and death. For him the three were inter-related. Pain and sin, sin and death, were inter-connected; yet for him, too, as for us, *all* "the sufferings

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of this present time" are not bound up with sin. Much is to be laid to the account of the demonic powers, which in many ways correspond to our "laws" of nature. The supreme problem for Paul, as for us, is to subsume, under the thought of one God, the apparently freakish, irresponsible, cruel and hostile forces in life. How does he solve it? Again by the doctrine of the supreme gift of God, Jesus Christ. "We cannot claim that the Universe is made by such a God as the Christian theology presents, unless we are first sure that one of the things that has come into the world from that source, is the life of Christ."<sup>1</sup> Paul preserves the correct perspective in this problem of evil. He sees that, if one important part of the problem is solved, all is sure of solution. He is confident that, if the evil which is a personal element in his own life is overcome and uprooted, it is a pledge for the world, of "a new creation." Through the gift of Christ to him, God had made a bad man good. "According as we ourselves have received mercy, so we lose not heart." He saw the same evil forces—"the rulers of this world"—that worked their will on his own and other lives, work their will on Him, and become discredited and despoiled in the effort. Jesus was raised from the dead, and with Him potentially all creation. Paul cannot now see God except through Jesus Christ. He knows who it is that is on the throne of the Universe. Again God has been first: He comes to us as Friend and Redeemer; another moral order is on the immediate horizon; Christ is coming again. Within the ancient and outworn apocalyptic forms of thought, there lies implicit the real meaning of the Cross and Resurrection. The time is not so short as Paul thought, but even the

<sup>1</sup> W. Temple, "The Faith and Modern Thought," p. 144.

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fore-shortened view of the second Advent means that the redeeming love that came in the Cross of Christ, and thus identified itself with human life, is all along sustaining and breaking into the world, and will never leave it till the work is done. Sin and pain, as Paul conceived them, are no longer facts to be considered at arm's length. They are personal incidents in the experience of the individual,

"Desperate tides of the whole great world's anguish  
Forced through the channels of a single heart."

This is the point where men are all alike, and there is neither Jew nor Greek; we might add also that it is the point where there is neither man of the first century nor man of the twentieth. Paul's faith is that when Christ has conquered the force of these "desperate tides" in one single heart, He has given a pledge that there will be victory all along the line. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Legalistic morality in our day, where it usurps the place of religion, takes a form somewhat different to and nobler than the Pharisaic. It seeks to conserve life, to mitigate pain, and to wipe away tears. Paul like John, knows that the wiping away of tears is not done by the napkin of social reform or political effort, but from within, and directly by God. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." The Holy City descends from heaven among men. I do not think that Paul's principles are inimical to measures of social or political reform, but that he would class them as temporary measures of restraint until "the Man of sin be revealed." Whatever the obscure phrase may or may not mean, it at least conveys the impression that sin will be known for what it is. There is a type of thought that insists on changing the environment, before



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it can believe in change for the man. Pharisaic legalism attempted the same task. Paul's aim is not to conserve life or to mitigate pain at all costs. The "appeal to Cæsar" is ever as he used it, an emergency and temporary measure. Paul can think of death as better than life, of dying to live; of pain as better than pleasure; of suffering as "the raw material of glory." The new life and the radiant glory are born thereby even in the life here below, "in the flesh." It is a new and more excellent way, the way of love. Here also God is first. That God Himself has trodden it is our confidence; the healed wounds of the living Christ are our assurance of victory.

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Headley Brothers, Printers, Ashford, Kent; and Bishopsgate, E.C.







BS2651 .S86  
Strachen, Robert Harvey, 1873-  
The individuality of Saint Paul.

BS            Strachen, Robert Harvey, 1873-  
2651           The individuality of Saint Paul. Lond  
S86           J. Clarke [pref. 1916]  
              303p. 20cm.

1. Paul, Saint, apostle. I. Title.

330642

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